

HOW TO ESCAPE FROM A SINKING CAR

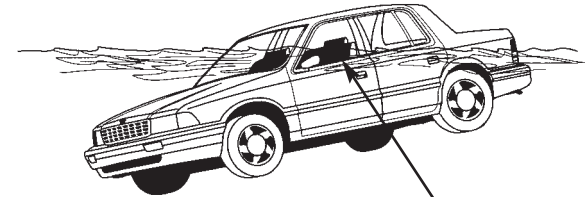
1 As soon as you hit the water, open your window.

This is your best chance of escape, because opening the door will be very difficult given the outside water pressure. (To be safe, you should drive with the windows and doors slightly open whenever you are near water or are driving on ice.) Opening the windows allows water to come in and equalize the pressure. Once the water pressure inside and outside the car is equal, you'll be able to open the door.

2 If your power windows won't work or you cannot roll your windows down all the way, attempt to break the glass with your foot or shoulder or a heavy object such as an antitheft steering wheel lock.

3 Get out.

Do not worry about leaving anything behind unless it is another person. Vehicles with engines in front will sink at a steep angle. If the water is fifteen feet or deeper, the vehicle may end up on its roof, upside down. For this reason, you must get out as soon as possible, while the car is still afloat. Depending on the vehicle, floating time will range from a few seconds to a few minutes. The more airtight the car, the longer it floats. Air in the car will quickly be forced out



As soon as you hit the water open your window. Otherwise, the pressure of the water will make it very difficult to escape.

If you were unable to exit before hitting the water, attempt to break a window with your foot or a heavy object.



through the trunk and cab, and an air bubble is unlikely to remain once the car hits bottom. Get out as early as possible.

4 If you are unable to open the window or break it, you have one final option.

Remain calm and do not panic. Wait until the car begins filling with water. When the water reaches your

head, take a deep breath and hold it. Now the pressure should be equalized inside and outside, and you should be able to open the door and swim to the surface.

HOW TO AVOID BREAKING THROUGH THE ICE

- Cars and light trucks need at least eight inches of clear, solid ice on which to drive safely.
- Driving early or late in the season is not advisable.
- Leaving your car in one place for a long period of time can weaken the ice beneath it, and cars should not be parked—or driven—close together.
- Cross any cracks at right angles, and drive slowly.
- New ice is generally thicker than old ice.
- Direct freezing of lake or stream water is stronger than refreezing, freezing of melting snow, or freezing of water bubbling up through cracks.
- If there is a layer of snow on the ice, beware: a layer of snow insulates the ice, slowing the freezing process, and the snow's weight can decrease the bearing capacity of the ice.
- Ice near the shore is weaker.
- River ice is generally weaker than lake ice.
- River mouths are dangerous, because the ice near them is weaker.
- Carry several large nails in your pocket, and a length of rope. The nails will help you pull yourself out of the ice, and the rope can be thrown to someone on more solid ice, or can be used to help someone else.

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