BFGC Safety Message

Driving the L200 4x4 at Chipping

- It's important always to drive within your ability. Speed needs to be moderate and flotation through mud and snow needs to be kept up, hence "within your ability."
- Usually taking your time will allow you to pick a smooth path and allow you time to react to the varieties of terrain you can encounter like moving rocks and logs under the tyres.
- If you have a ground clearance deficiency, going slow helps here, in that, if you do hit a rock with the differential or another rock grabber, it will usually stop the vehicle on impact or you will lightly scrape over it. If you were going too fast and hit a rock or other obstacle, it could knock a hole in the oil pan, differential, or even knock off the oil filter.
- Driving diagonally = Rollover. Always drive straight down hills or steep terrain. Know your approach and departure angles, the bumper to tyre distance. Some trails will require off-camber driving. In situations like this, it's best to go slow, keeping the tyres on the tracks.
- Make every attempt to avoid losing attention and ascending up a rock or stump on the up-side of the hill.
- Vehicles will tend to slide sideways before rolling over – the tyres will slip sideways a little. Stop if the slide puts you off the edge of the track. If it is clear downhill and a rollover is imminent, immediately turn the vehicle into the slide and drive it down. If that is not an option, and you are going over, turn the vehicle off and hold on to your seat-bottom while hoping that the seat belt works properly.
- Reducing tire pressure will increase traction on gravel and sand. For most 4-wheeling purposes, a tire pressure of 18 to 20psi will be adequate.
- Never overlook the importance of reading the manufacturer's label.
- The air pressure difference between the front and rear is due to the tyre and auto manufacturers' experimentation for over/understeer and load variances.
- One of the most crucial aspects to off-roading is understanding the absolute importance of tyre pressure. Among the most pertinent tyre pressure considerations in regards to summer, off-roading is utilizing optimum sand tyre pressure.
- It's a simple fact, which some die-hard truckers still deny, the bigger the footprint, the softer the stuff you can travel in. Boiled down, it's nothing more than a fact of nature. For those who say skinny, hard tyres are better for snow, mud or whatever, please tell me why they don't use ten-speed bicycle-type tyres on snowmobiles?
- The choice of tread pattern, otherwise known as your tyre's footprint, is extremely important to consider during your new tyre decision-making process, and especially so if you are fitting your truck for an off-road adventure.
- Tread pattern should be chosen based on the intended use of your truck. The most popular tread pattern for all-around off-road use is a mud terrain pattern.

Common 4x4 Driving Techniques

The following techniques are common to all types of terrain. Techniques for particular types of terrain are mentioned under the different terrain headings.

Hand Position

When driving off-road, it is important not to place your thumbs on the inside of the steering wheel. When driving over any large ruts or potholes, the wheel could suddenly turn. This may result in the thumb being bruised or even dislocated if it is left inside the rim.

Remembering to leave your thumbs on the outside of the steering wheel is a very easy skill to acquire and should become second nature to you.

With power steering fitted to most 4 Wheel drives these days, this technique is not as critical as the power steering unit dampens out sudden steering wheel movements as well as steering stabilizers.

Owners of non-power steering vehicles will have undoubtedly experienced at some time the force at which the steering wheel turns when hitting an obstruction.

Diff Position

It is important to know the position of your front and rear differentials as they are usually the lowest ground clearance point of your vehicle. Similarly, any other low ground clearance points should be noted e.g. exhaust, spare tyre etc.

When a large rock or other obstacle is on a track that you must drive over, you should ensure you avoid driving directly over it with the lowest ground clearance point of your vehicle.

Braking

When using the vehicle's brakes hard, your vehicle's front suspension compresses and you 'use up' most of its suspension travel, When braking sharply to avoid an obstacle e.g. pothole or rut, and you cannot stop in time, release the brake pedal just prior to hitting the obstacle. This will allow the front suspension to return to its normal height and give more suspension travel when hitting the obstacle.

Vehicle Limitations

A four-wheel-drive vehicle cannot be treated like a normal car when cornering. The 4WD will roll over much easier than a car while cornering if they are taken too fast, due to the higher centre of gravity. This applies to gravel and paved roads equally. Although a four-wheel-drive vehicle generally has better traction on gravel than a car, when safe cornering speeds are exceeded the four wheel drive will tend to roll earlier than a car.

Also View:

- 4x4 Off-Road Driving Techniques & Safety
- 4x4 Water Crossings
- 4x4 Driving Hills & Rocky Surfaces
- 4x4 Driving with Mud Tyres and Mud Driving
- 4x4 Sand Driving Safety
- Tools and Spare Parts for Safe 4x4 Driving
- 4x4 Jacking & Snatch Recovery
- 4x4 Terrain Knowledge
- 4x4 Winter Driving
- 4x4 Driving and Usage of Recovery Straps
- 4X4 Winch Guide
- 4x4 Driving and Vehicle Insurance