



Driving in the Highlands

Winter:

During the wintertime the Icelandic highlands are impassable/closed for anyone not in a modified vehicle (super jeep). Timing of these closures depends entirely on weather conditions each year. Every year is different – winter arrives at different times so a closure date is not set in stone.

To visit the Icelandic highlands in wintertime you will need a modified vehicle along with a driver, skilled and experienced with the conditions.

Summer:

Highland driving is very popular during the summertime. It requires a whole different set of skills than normal driving, however. Conditions can change even more rapidly than on lowlands and roads often require you to cross unbridged rivers. Roads can be rough, and you may not reach speeds over 40 km/h so make sure you plan for enough time. Because of this, gathering information about the area you are travelling to and leaving a detailed Travel Plan is extremely important.

- Start by checking if roads leading to the area have opened or not. What are the road conditions?
- Make sure to check the weather forecast for the area while keeping in mind that it can change rapidly so prepare for all kinds of weather.
- Information Centers in the area, rangers and wardens are good sources for detailed information.
- Make sure that you have the proper knowledge and experience for driving in the highlands.
- A small vehicle has no business into the highlands – a 4x4 (4WD) with good ground clearance is always required !

River Crossing in the highlands:

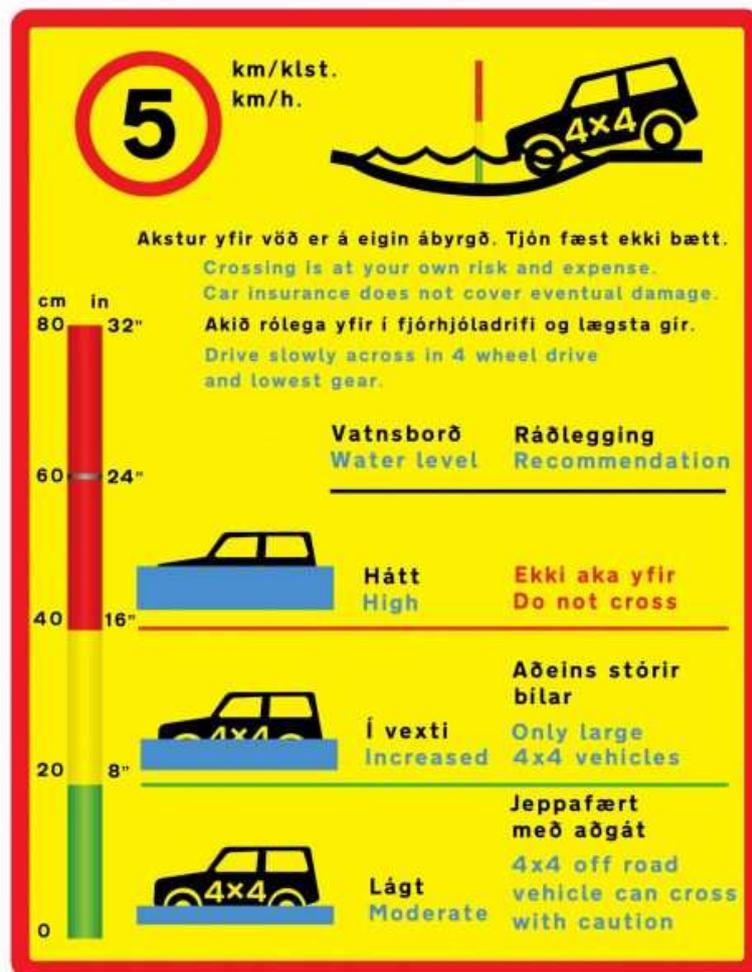
Driving in the highlands will inevitably lead you to a river crossing. Keep the following things in mind:

- There's no insurance in the world that covers any damage that can be lead to crossing rivers or any body of water. The risk is yours and damages can cost thousands of euros/dollars.
- Do not cross a river unless you are a 100% sure of being able to get to the other side – if you're unsure, wait for the next car to come by and decide if you can go or not.
- The current and depth of the rivers change according to glacial melt and precipitation. Keep in mind that rivers can become impassable after heavy rainfall.



- Be sure of the route you are going to take before entering the water.
- Put your car in a low-gear and cross the river slowly (5 km/h) and steady – do not switch gears while in the water!
- Always try to go downstream as going against the current will increase the risk of water going into your engine.
- Even the smallest of rivers have led to some costly damage simply because of the drivers choosing the wrong routes or going too fast.
- Do NOT enter the river where it seems calm – this is a sign of depth and is not the ideal spot to cross.
- Do not be fooled by big, modified vehicles. They can cross the rivers at higher speeds because they are equipped with a snorkel – allowing the oxygen intake of the engine to be at a higher point than on normal vehicles.

Look for signs like this one and the measuring poles in the rivers. The colors indicate the depth of the rivers but keep in mind that not all rivers have this helpful tool:





Here are a couple of rules that you need to have in mind when crossing rivers:

1. Never drive up stream

Driving up the stream is never a good idea, you should go with the flow. You get much better traction with less chance of you losing the control. By driving up against the stream also increases the chances of the water flowing up on the truck's hood and in to the air intake, destroying the engine in the process.

2. Have your truck in the 4WD and low-range

Make sure the truck is in 4WD. By also having the truck in the low-range you increase the traction, adding to the torque and preventing the wheels from spinning to fast. You don't want to spin the wheels in the water and lose the grip. You also want to avoid switching the gears in middle of the river.

3. Do not drive too fast and do not stop

Never drive too fast when crossing. By doing that the water can flow up in the air intake. It also increases the chance of you not seeing obstacles in your path, large rocks or uneven ground. You want to avoid driving into large rocks in the path as you could get stuck on them or damage your vehicle. You also want to avoid stopping the truck in the water. If you do, the truck could start to sink down into the ground and you will end up getting stuck.

4. Plan your route

You want to have a plan A, B and C when crossing rivers. Plan A is the route you aim on driving. You need to know where you want to dive in, what route you are going to be driving in the water and where you want to get out of the river. Play the scenario in your head and imagine what could possibly go wrong. Then you make a Plan B, in case that something happens and so you won't be surprised. The plan C is just for the damage control if all else fails.

5. Read the river

When making your plans you need to map out where the river is deep and where it is shallow. You also want to know where the large rocks are and all the other possible obstacles. The worst place to cross the river is where the river looks most calm because that is where the river is deepest.

6. Don't drive over if you are in doubt

The best rule of thumb is to not cross the river if you are not sure you will make it or if you are in doubt. You can wait for other trucks to cross the river first, so you see what the best way is to



cross.

7. Do not drive off the road

On popular highland roads, the rivers are often marked where you should enter the river and where to get up. You should always enter the river where the road ends and continue on the road at the other side of the river.



Elves and the hidden people are extremely tidy, so if you want a visit from them, keep the cars clean and don't anger them by crashing into their houses. 😊