



Winter Driving and Vehicle Safety

In winter it's important to recognize the hazards of winter weather driving, keep your vehicle in proper working condition and prepare for the unexpected.

Tips for driving in the snow

- Accelerate and decelerate slowly.
- Drive slowly.
- The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should increase to eight to ten seconds.
- Know your brakes.
- Don't stop if you can avoid it.
- Don't power up hills.
- Don't stop going up a hill.

Vehicle Safety Tips

- Keep your gas tank filled above halfway to avoid emergencies in bad weather.
- If you are stuck on the ice without sand or cat litter, in a pinch, you can take the mats out of your car, place them next to the tires, and slowly inch the car onto and across the mats.
- To restore proper windshield wiper blade action, smooth the rubber blades with fine sandpaper to remove any grit and pits.
- Gently rub a small, moistened, cloth bag of iodized salt on the outside of your windshield to prevent the ice and snow from sticking.
- Fog-proof your mirrors and the inside of your windshields with shaving cream. Spray & wipe if off with paper towels.
- Avoid driving when you have the flu, which can reduce your reaction time almost six times as much as moderate alcohol intake.

Ensure Your Vehicle is Working Properly

- **Brakes:** should provide even and balanced braking. Ensure that brake fluid is at the proper level.
- **Cooling System:** Ensure a proper mixture of 50/50 antifreeze and water in the cooling system at the proper level.
- **Electrical System:** Check the ignition system to ensure that the battery is fully charged and that the connections are clean. Check that the alternator belt is in good condition with proper tension.
- **Engine:** Inspect all engine systems.
- **Exhaust System:** Check exhaust for leaks and that all clamps and hangers are snug.
- **Tires:** Check for proper inflation, tread depth and no signs of damage or uneven wear. **Oil:** Check that oil is at proper level.
- **Visibility Systems:** Inspect all exterior lights, defrosters (windshield and rear window), and wipers. Install winter windshield wipers.

An Emergency Kit with the following items is recommended in vehicles

- Cellphone or two-way radio
- Windshield ice scraper
- Snow brush
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Shovel
- Tow chain
- Traction aids (bag of sand or cat litter)
- Jumper cables
- Emergency flares
- Extra windshield fluid
- Non-perishable snacks
- Water
- Road maps
- Blankets
- Change of clothes & boots

If You Are Stranded in a Vehicle

- Stay in the vehicle.
- Call for emergency assistance if needed.
- Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. You may become disoriented and get lost in blowing and drifting snow.
- Display a trouble sign by hanging a brightly colored cloth on the vehicle's radio antenna and raising the hood.
- Turn on the vehicle's engine for about 10 minutes each hour and run the heat to keep warm.
- Turn on the vehicle's dome light when the vehicle is running as an additional signal.
- Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and open a downwind window slightly for ventilation.

Other helpful info:

[Driving in Ice Storms](#)

[Safe Winter Driving](#)