

Winter Weather: Winter Driving

Let's face it-nasty or weather or not, there are times when we all need transportation in the winter. Driving can be dangerous and often deadly in winter weather conditions and it is important to be aware of basic safety when driving or traveling.

Winter Automobile Preparations:

- * Make sure your vehicle is ready for the season. Throughout the winter keep you gas tank at least half full to prevent your gas line from freezing.
- * Carry a winter survival kit in your car. This kit should include: Blanket or sleeping bag, extra warm clothes, non perishable snack foods, candle, matches, and metal can (for melting snow/ice), Heavy duty jumper cables (do not use unless you know how), Roadside reflectors/flares, whistle for signaling help, flashlight, radio (and extra batteries), portable first aid kit, tow rope or chain, lock de-icer, a heavy duty ice scraper with a snow broom, packages of disposable hand and feet warmers, small shovel, small bag of sand or road salt, basic tool kit (screwdrivers, pliers, some stiff wire and duct tape). Having a cell phone is the best insurance in a roadside emergency. Remember, any cell phone will connect with 911. The phone dies not have to be activated, or on any type of calling plan.

Out on the Road:

- * Before you increase your speed, get a feel for the traction. Remember that bridges and overpasses can be more slippery than other parts of the road. Do not brake suddenly. If you have anti-lock brakes apply steady and firm pressure to pedal (do not pump anti-lock breaks).
- * When driving near snow plows stay back to stay alive. These are large machines and you should only pass with EXTREME caution. The average snowplow weights 17 times more than an average car. If you are in a collision you will lose. Be patient and follow at least eight seconds behind the snowplow.
- * Reduce your speed and increase the distance between you and car in front of you when road conditions are slippery.
- * CLEAR YOUR WINDOWS! On snowy days start the engine to let the car warm up a bit, then clear all the windows of snow and ice. Not just the windshield, make sure the side windows, rear window, and all the lights are completely clear. Also wash your windows, headlights and wiper blades regularly.
- * Slow down and increase your following distance and stay alert.

During a Winter Storm:

- * The best option is to not drive or travel at all! If you must travel then travel by daylight and use major highways.
- * Check the latest weather information as you drive. Most (but not all) weather travels from west to east. This means that in a winter storm these roads will

generally have the worst driving conditions and will often be the first to shut down.

- * Always fill your gas tank before entering open country, even if it only for a short distance.
- * Let others know your travel routes and destination.

If you are caught in a Winter Storm:

- * Stay in your vehicle. Do not attempt to walk in a winter storm. You can easily become lost in blowing and drifting snow. Staying in your car decreases your risk of frostbite and increases the chance of being rescued.
- * Avoid overexertion. Be careful when shoveling, pushing your car, or performing other chores in the bitter cold.
- * Beware of carbon monoxide. Run the engine a few minutes every hour or every half hour in extreme cold. Keep one window slightly open. Make sure snow does not block the exhaust pipe.
- * Tie a bright cloth to the antenna.

Resources

American Red Cross

www.santel.net/winter1.html

Winter Weather Awareness Page-Great information to learn about Winter Weather. Also has a handy quiz.

www.kwqc.com

KWQC local weather information and updates

www.weather.com

Excellent site for learning about any type of weather. Contains, local, regional, and national weather information as well as inter survival and storm information.

www.nws.noaa.gov

National Weather Service. Great resource on all types of weather.

Clothing Stores Online

www.SierraTradingPost.com Outdoor/sporting goods retail store. Sells winter clothing.

www.landsend.com Carries quality winter clothing as well as other retail clothing.

Consignment Stores Listing

www.northofnorth.com/stores.html