



Tips For Winter Driving

Safety Talk | Motor Vehicle

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Driving requires all the care and caution possible any time of year. Winter driving has even greater challenges because of wet and icy road surfaces, longer hours of darkness and poor visibility because of snow, rain and fog.

Here are several tips to help you drive more safely this winter both on the job and in your personal vehicle:

Keep your vehicle well-maintained and in good working order. Have good tread on your tires, the engine tuned-up for winter, and all lights functioning properly. Add anti-freeze and windshield wiper fluid if necessary.

Allow enough time to get to your destination. Rushing can lead to an accident. Leave a few minutes earlier allowing plenty of time to get to your destination. Wear your seat belt.

Good visibility is essential to safe driving. Clear your windows, headlights, as well as your hood and roof, of ice or snow before starting out and repeat as needed.

Stay alert and calm. Maintain a safe speed and drive defensively. Don't use alcohol or drugs while driving.

Drive appropriately for road conditions. The posted speed limits are for dry conditions. Driving on a wet road can cause hydroplaning as a thin barrier of water builds up between your tires and the road surface, causing your vehicle to slip. If you begin to lose control of your steering, take your foot off the gas. Watch out for black ice.

Keep a safe distance between you and other vehicles. The "two second rule of thumb" works well on dry roads and in ideal conditions, but in winter you should extend it to four seconds. Watch the vehicle directly ahead of you. As it passes a stationary object start counting - "one thousand and one", "one thousand and two", and so on. Your vehicle should not pass the same object until you say the word "four. Look farther ahead in traffic than you normally do. Actions by cars and trucks will alert to problems and give you extra time to react safely

Brake early, brake correctly. In slippery conditions, never jam on your brakes in a panic stop. You might skid and lose control of the vehicle. Instead, stomp on anti-lock brakes, pump on regular brakes.

Avoid making abrupt lane changes. The passing lane may be in worse shape than the driving lane. There may also be a snow ridge between the two lanes.

Watch for slippery over passes and bridges. They freeze faster than pavement.

Leave room for maintenance vehicles and plows. The law requires you to slow down and stay back at least 200 feet when approaching emergency or maintenance vehicles and snowplows. If a snowplow is parked on the side of the road with emergency flashers turned on, move over.

Remember:

A four-wheel drive vehicle may help you get going quicker than other vehicles but it won't help you stop any faster.

Don't use cruise control. Touching your brakes to deactivate the cruise control feature can cause you to lose control in slippery conditions.

Winter driving can be challenging. Take your time and arrive safely.