



Personal Risk Services

Winter Driving Tips

Driving can be stressful. Traffic, road construction, and distracted drivers all make for hazards on the road; combined with winter weather conditions can make driving that much more stressful. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when driving during the winter.

- Avoid driving while fatigued. It's important to get the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather driving to reduce risks.
- Never run a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage, even if it's just until it "warms up".
- Make certain your tires are in good condition and properly inflated.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full at all times and full if severe winter weather is possible.
- If possible, avoid using the car's parking brake in cold, rainy or snowy weather.
- Do not use your cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand, etc.).
- Always look and steer in the direction you want to go to ensure safe travels and to avoid possible hazards.
- Use your seat belt every time you get into your vehicle.
- Watch weather reports prior to a long-distance drive or before driving in isolated areas. Delay any trip when bad weather is expected. If you must travel, let others know your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.
- Have regular vehicle inspections conducted to ensure you vehicle is in peak operating condition.

Snow-bound vehicle tips

- Prepare an emergency car kit that contains:
 - blankets
 - gloves
 - hats
 - food and water
 - any necessary medication
 - snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper
 - abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter (in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow)
 - jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and markers
- Make sure you have the appropriate phone numbers in your cell phone in case emergency phone calls are needed.
- If snow bound, stay with your vehicle. The car will provide temporary shelter and make it easier for rescuers to locate you.

- Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna or place a cloth at the top of a rolled up window to signal distress.
- At night, keep the dome light on if possible. It only uses a small amount of electricity and will make it easier for rescuers to find you.



- Run the engine and heater just long enough to remove the chill to conserve gasoline.
- Don't try to walk in a severe snow storm. It's easy to lose sight of your vehicle and become lost in blowing snow.
- Don't over exert yourself if you try to push or dig your vehicle out of the snow.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe isn't clogged with snow, ice or mud. A blocked exhaust could cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment with the engine running.

Tips for driving in the snow

- Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads so accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids.
- Increase the following time between vehicles to at least eight to ten seconds. This increased time will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.
- Know your brakes. If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS) and need to slow down quickly, press hard on the pedal; it's normal for the pedal to vibrate a bit when the ABS is activated.
- If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it. Don't stop if you can avoid it. There's a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling.
- Use caution when approaching hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill as slowly as possible.

Stay home. If you really don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can. Don't tempt fate: If you don't have somewhere you have to be, watch the snow from indoors.

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