

Winter Driving Safety

Traveling during the winter months can prove challenging if the roads are snowy and ice covered, or if there is the potential for a winter storm.

According to the National Weather Service, 75 percent of all winter weather-related deaths occur on the road, either in accidents or by people becoming stranded. When the weather is bad and driving conditions are poor, the best bet is to stay at home. Understand the hazards that may impact your travel. Ice, snow, blizzard conditions, snow squalls, high winds, and freezing precipitation. If you are on the roads, try to exit safely, drive slowly, use your four-way hazard lights, and increase your following distance.

Be in the Know

- Know where to get reliable and timely communications. A few good methods to receive alerts and notifications are a NOAA Weather Radio, text alerts from local news stations, and county mass notification systems.
- Know the difference between a Winter Storm **WATCH** and a **WARNING**.
 - A **WATCH** means Be Prepared and a **WARNING** means **Act!**
- Know how to stay safe while traveling.

Make a Kit

Make an emergency kit to have in each of your vehicles. In case you are stranded, keep an emergency supply kit in your car with these automobile extras:

- Jumper cables
- Flares or reflective triangle
- Ice scraper
- Car cell phone charger
- Blankets
- Map
- Cat litter or sand (for better tire traction)
- Prepare Your Car for Emergencies

Have a mechanic check:

- Antifreeze levels
- Battery and ignition system
- Brakes
- Exhaust system
- Fuel and air filters and thermostat
- Heater and defroster
- Lights and flashing hazard lights
- Oil
- Windshield wiper equipment and washer fluid level



Survival Tips if Stranded

The best advice is to remain in the vehicle. If nothing else, you are guaranteed shelter. Other helpful tips include:

- Tie a bright colored cloth (handkerchief, towel, etc.) to the vehicle's driver door handle or outside mirror.
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow. Poisonous gases can filter into the vehicle if the pipe is clogged.
- Run the engine and heater no more than 10 minutes every hour, leaving a downwind window slightly open for ventilation while the engine is running.
- Light a flare or turn on a flashlight to let others know you're stranded in the vehicle.
- Use blankets or seat covers for added warmth. If you must leave your vehicle during a severe snow storm or blizzard, secure a line of rope or cord to yourself and the vehicle to avoid becoming lost or disoriented.
- Keep bottled water in your emergency kit or vehicle.
- Remain calm. Chances for rescue are better if you remain calm and in your vehicle.