



## Get Your Car Ready for Winter Driving

### How can I make my car safer for winter driving?

### Winter Driving



Be Prepared, Be Safe!

Get your car ready for winter with a check-up. Before winter, have a mechanic check your:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> battery         | <input type="checkbox"/> ignition system | <input type="checkbox"/> exhaust system               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> belts and hoses | <input type="checkbox"/> oil             | <input type="checkbox"/> heater/defroster             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> radiator        | <input type="checkbox"/> brakes          | <input type="checkbox"/> windshield wipers and lights |

Make sure your car's tires are in good shape. Worn or damaged tires can make driving unsafe. Have them checked or replaced before winter starts. Remember to check tire air pressure often, since it drops in cold weather.

### How can I drive safely in a winter storm?

If weather is very bad, avoid driving if you can. If you must drive, remember to always wear your seatbelt. Make sure that other people in the car wear their seatbelts. Place young children in child safety seats (children under 40 pounds) or booster seats (children who weigh 40 to 80 pounds). Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to get there. Call them to let them know that you arrived safely. Ask them to call for help if they do not hear from you.

When there is snow, ice, or sleet on the road, you may need to slow down to stay in control when driving. Keep extra space between your car and the car in front of you because it takes longer to stop on a slippery road. If you leave enough space between your car and the car in front of you, you may avoid having to brake suddenly on a slippery surface and it will be easier to stay in control of your car. In ice storms, very heavy snow, or storms where there is a lot of wind, tree branches may break and fall on to the road. This makes it very dangerous to drive.

### What if I am trapped in my car during a winter storm?

#### To stay safe and be rescued:

- Pull off the road, and turn on your hazard lights. Hang a distress flag (bright colored or red cloth) from the radio antenna or window. To draw rescue planes' attention in rural areas, spread a large, colorful cloth over the snow.
- Stay in your car! Rescuers are most likely to find you there. If you start walking to get help you may get lost, be hurt, or get sick.
- If there is someone in the car with you, take turns sleeping so that you can see and hear other cars or rescuers

- Turn on the inside light so rescue teams can see you at night. Try not to run the battery down.
- Be careful if you have to get out of your car on a busy road. If you can, use the door away from traffic.

### To stay warm:

- Move around a little bit to keep warm. Huddle with other passengers and use your coats as blankets. If it is very cold, use road maps, seat covers, floor mats, newspapers or extra clothing to keep warm.
- Save your fuel. Run the engine and heater ten minutes each hour to keep warm.
- Running the car can give off carbon monoxide (a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas). To avoid poisoning, open a window a little bit and make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of snow.

## Winter emergency supply checklist

It is a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your car. Make a kit with the supplies below and keep it in your car.

- emergency flares and brightly colored distress flag or sign (to draw rescuers' attention)
- a battery powered radio with extra batteries or a hand-powered radio
- flashlight and extra batteries or a hand-powered flashlight
- snack foods like granola bars, raisins, and peanut butter
- 3 gallons of water for each person
- first aid kit with a pocket knife
- blankets and extra hats, socks and mittens
- matches
- jumper cables
- windshield scraper and small broom
- shovel
- tow chain or rope
- road salt and sand



For more winter driving tips, visit

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/beforestorm/preparecar.asp>



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*The purpose of this newsletter is to provide preparedness information to members of the community.*

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