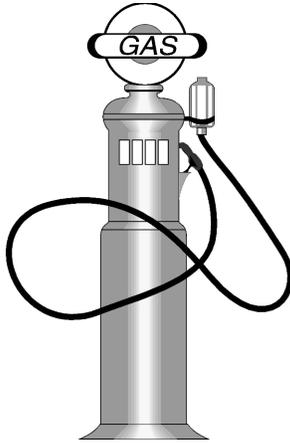




During a Winter Storm or Extreme Cold: Winter Driving

Tips for Winter Driving

The leading cause of death during winter storms is transportation accidents. During a winter storm, ask yourself, “Is this trip really necessary?” If you decide the trip cannot be delayed, following the advice below will increase your chance of having a safe trip.



- Check on weather conditions along your travel route. Listen to weather forecasts on TV and radio.
- Try not to travel alone, but if you must, tell someone at home that you are taking a trip, where you are going, the primary and alternate routes you will travel, and when you expect to arrive. When you reach your destination, make a call to report you have arrived.
- Before you leave town, fill your gas tank. While traveling, frequently refill the gas tank. Not only will this prevent ice in the tank and fuel lines, but the stops will relieve tense muscles.
- Buckle your seat belts.
- Keep your windows clear of snow and ice. Do not start until your windshield is defrosted.
- Be prepared to turn back and seek shelter if conditions become threatening.
- In fog, drive with your headlights set on dim, or use foglights. If the fog is too dense, pull off the roadway and stop. Do not drive at five or ten miles per hour.
- Do not overdrive your headlights. Stay within limits of your vision.
- Drive slower and increase your following distance.
- Roadway conditions may vary depending on the sun, shade, or roadway surface. Watch for slick spots especially under bridges, on overpasses and in shaded spots. Be prepared to react physically and mentally.
- If the pavement is snow or ice covered, start slowly and brake gently. Begin braking early when you come to an intersection. If you start to slide, ease off the gas pedal or brakes. Steer into the direction of the skid until you feel you have regained traction, then straighten your vehicle.
- When a snow plow is coming towards you, allow plenty of room

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- for it to pass. When the center line is being cleared and salted, the plow tip may be on or over the line.
- When you approach a snow plow from behind, pass with care and only when you can see the road ahead of the plow. You should not try to pass in blowing snow—there may be a vehicle in that cloud of snow.
 - Be alert when you approach a cloud of snow which covers the road, especially on passing lanes of interstates or freeways. A snow plow may be at work clearing the lane or preparing to run around.
 - Be careful after a rear-end accident. If you are bumped from behind and do not feel comfortable exiting your vehicle, motion the other driver and drive to the nearest police station, 24-hour store, service station, hospital, or fire station.

If a Storm Traps You in Your Car

If your vehicle breaks down or if you are unable to drive in a storm, take the following precautions:

- Pull as far off the road as possible. Your greatest personal danger at this point is that of being hit by passing cars.
- Tie a colored cloth to your antenna or door.
- After the snow stops falling, raise the hood—indicating trouble.
- Stay in your vehicle.
- After making sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine about ten minutes each hour for heat; open the windows a little for fresh air and to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.
- Turn on the inside dome light so rescue teams can see you at night, but be careful not to run the battery down.

Caught Outside During a Storm

If you are ever caught outside during a storm, follow the steps below:

- Seek shelter immediately. If no shelter is nearby, prepare a lean-to, wind-break, or snow cave for protection from the wind.
- Cover all exposed parts of the body.
- Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
- Do not eat snow as it will lower your body temperature. You must melt it first.
- Do not walk looking for help unless it is visible within 100 feet; it is too easy to become disoriented in the storm.