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WINTER DRIVING TIPS

In addition to the basic safe driving habits we practice all year long - buckling up, driving alert and sober, and driving at a safe and legal speed - be aware of extra steps you can take during the winter months.

- Make sure your car is ready for the season and that the brakes, battery, exhaust and cooling systems, headlights, fluids, windshield wipers and washers are all in proper working order.
- Keep close tabs on the weather. Avoid traveling, especially alone, if severe weather is forecast. Before taking a trip, tell someone at your destination your expected arrival time and your route.
- Keep an [emergency survival kit](#) in the car. Emergency items can include:
 - a working flashlight and road flares
 - an ice scraper, snow brush and shovel
 - jumper cables, tow chain and a toolkit
 - a blanket, warm clothes, boots, hat and gloves
 - a metal bucket or coffee can, small candle and matches or a disposable lighter
 - a brightly colored square of cloth such as a bandanna
 - basic first aid kit
 - a large plastic garbage bag (can be used to insulate feet, legs and torso)
 - a bag of sand, salt or cat litter to use for traction when tire is stuck
 - high energy, non-perishable foods (granola bars, unsalted nuts, dried fruits)
- If your car has been outside during a snowfall, brush all the snow off before setting out. Snow left on the front hood will blow into the front vent and cause defrosting problems, and can also melt and re-freeze on the windshield. Snow on the roof will cover the rear window and snow on the rear deck will blow onto tail lights. Pay particular attention to cleaning off headlights and tail lights so that other motorists can see you.
- Adjust your speed to the conditions and increase following distances. Remember that bridges and overpasses can be more slippery than other parts of the road. If you begin to skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas and gently turn the wheel in the direction you want the car to go. With regular brakes, slowly apply pressure, but don't let the wheels lock. If you have anti-lock brakes apply a steady firm pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump ABS brakes.
- Check that your cell phone is fully charged for use during emergencies. Because driving requires your full attention, be sure to find a safe place to pull over when you



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need to make a call.

- If you get stranded while traveling...
 - Stay with your vehicle. Don't try to walk to safety - you're safer staying in your vehicle.
 - Call for help on your cell phone
 - Make yourself visible. Tie a brightly colored (preferably red) banner or cloth on your antenna or hang it out a window. After the snowfall ends, raise the hood of your engine to indicate trouble.
 - Run vehicle for ten minutes every hour. Operate the heater and keep your overhead light on to remain visible for rescuers. Keep the exhaust pipe clear to prevent fumes from entering the vehicle, and always leave a down-wind window open slightly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, keep the radiator free of snow to prevent overheating.
 - Keep moving. From time to time vigorously move your arms, fingers, legs and toes to keep blood circulating and to stay warm. Avoid over-doing it. It is important not to get hot and sweaty because wet clothing loses its insulating ability. If you are with others, huddle together for warmth and sleep in shifts.

Acknowledgments:

[National Safety Council](#)



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