

Safe Winter Driving Tips from the Traffic Safety Committee

Winter driving can pose some challenges, especially given unpredictable weather patterns and related driving conditions that result.

The Traffic Safety Committee would like to offers some suggestions to facilitate safer winter season driving. In review of various winter driving safety programs throughout the United States, we found that OSHA provides the most comprehensive and sensible model.

OSHA (Occupation Safety and Health Administration)¹, suggests that we follow a three stage model for safer winter driving with includes the concepts of preparation, protection and prevention.

1. Prepare –

Maintain Your Car: Check battery, tire tread, and windshield wipers, keep your windows clear, put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir, and check your antifreeze.

Have On Hand: Your identification (Driver's License), vehicle registration, insurance information, flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter, even floor mats), shovel, snow brush and ice scraper, warning devices (like flares) and blankets. For long trips, add food (energy bars work great) and water, medication and cell phone (with car charger!). Also, extra warm clothes such as gloves, sweaters and jackets are great to store in the trunk for emergencies.

Stopped or Stalled? Stay with your car, don't over exert, put bright markers on antenna or windows and shine dome light, and, if you run your car, clear exhaust pipe and run it just enough to stay warm. Call and wait at your vehicle for Police or responding rescue workers. If you **must** leave your vehicle for safety concerns etc.... **always leave a note** indicating: your name, home address, contact number(s) and where you are going.

Plan Your Route: Allow plenty of time (check the weather and leave early if necessary), be familiar with the maps/ directions, and **let others know your route and arrival time.**

2. Protect Yourself and Passengers –

Buckle up and use child safety seats properly

Never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag

Children 12 and under are much safer in the back seat

Focus on your driving. (Cell phones, pets etc... can create distractions)

¹ "Tips for Safe Winter Driving." *United States Department of Labor*. 08/22/2005. Occupational Safety & Health Administration, Web. 31 Dec 2009. <<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/safeDriving.html>>.

3. Prevent Crashes –

Drugs and alcohol never mix with driving

Slow down and increase distances between cars

Keep your eyes open for pedestrians walking in the road

Avoid fatigue – Get plenty of rest before the trip, stop at least every three hours, and rotate drivers if possible

If you are planning to drink, **ALWAYS** designate a sober driver OR stay put.

Additionally, the Traffic Safety Committee suggests the following if you should be involved in an accident (crash) during the winter season:

1. If you are involved in a “Crash” during a snow or ice event, dial 911 immediately. Do not wait or attempt to exit your vehicle to access any possible vehicle damage.
2. If able, drive your vehicle from the travel portion of the roadway to a nearby safe shoulder to avoid any additional possible hazards and or accidents.
3. Stay with your vehicle (inside with seat belt on) **if safety permits** and await the emergency responders.
4. If you feel ill or are injured as a result of the accident be sure to provide the 911 dispatcher this information. Relevant medical history (heart or diabetic conditions) are also highly relevant.

We wish you a Happy and Safe New Year!

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Anthony Giaimo
Traffic Safety Committee Chairman