



WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – ACCIDENT PREVENTION

December 2024

Winter driving can be especially dangerous due to icy roads, snowstorms, reduced visibility, and colder temperatures. These conditions require additional caution and preparation to ensure safe travel. Whether you're commuting, running errands, or driving for work, it's essential to be aware of the risks and know how to reduce them. Let's go over some critical tips for winter driving safety.

1. Vehicle Preparation

- **Hazard:** Cold temperatures and winter conditions can impact your vehicle's performance and reliability.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Inspect tires:** Ensure your tires are properly inflated and have sufficient tread. Consider using winter tires if you're in an area with heavy snow or ice.
 - **Check battery:** Cold weather can reduce the effectiveness of your car battery.
 - **Fluid levels:** Check antifreeze levels and replace windshield wiper fluid with a winter-grade solution that won't freeze in cold temperatures.
 - **Lights and wipers:** Ensure headlights, taillights, and turn signals are working properly. Replace wiper blades if they're worn.
 - **Emergency kit:** Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle with essentials like blankets, a flashlight, a first-aid kit, non-perishable snacks, a shovel, jumper cables, and extra clothing.



2. Clear Your Vehicle Before Driving

- **Hazard:** Snow and ice can obstruct visibility and pose a hazard to other drivers.
- **Prevention:**



- **Clear all snow and ice:** Before driving, make sure to remove snow and ice from the roof, windows, mirrors, headlights, and taillights.
 - **Check the windshield:** Clear the wipers and ensure the windshield is free of ice and snow to prevent it from obscuring your vision.
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3. Slow Down and Drive Cautiously

- **Hazard:** Icy and snowy roads reduce traction and stopping distances, making it easier to lose control.
 - **Prevention:**
 - **Reduce speed:** Slow down significantly when driving on icy, snowy, or wet roads. It may take longer to stop, so drive at a safe speed for the conditions.
 - **Increase following distance:** Allow extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you. In winter conditions, a longer stopping distance is required.
 - **Avoid sudden movements:** Avoid quick steering, braking, or acceleration to prevent losing control of your vehicle.
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4. Be Prepared for Reduced Visibility

- **Hazard:** Snowstorms, fog, and low daylight hours can make it difficult to see other vehicles, road signs, and hazards.
 - **Prevention:**
 - **Use headlights:** Keep headlights on in snow, fog, or rain to increase visibility. Use low beams in heavy snow or fog.
 - **Clear windows:** Ensure your windshield is free from frost or condensation. Keep the defroster running and make sure all windows are clear before driving.
 - **Drive cautiously in fog:** If you encounter thick fog, reduce your speed, and use fog lights or low-beam headlights. Pull over in a safe area if visibility becomes too poor.
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5. Handling Slippery Roads

- **Hazard:** Snow, ice, and slush on the road can lead to skidding or loss of vehicle control.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Brake gently:** If you start to slide, don't slam on the brakes. Gently pump the brakes to regain control. If you have anti-lock brakes, apply slow even pressure.



- **Steer in the direction of the skid:** If your vehicle starts to slide, steer into the skid (turn the wheel in the direction the rear of the vehicle is going) to regain control.
- **Know your vehicle's handling:** Understand how your vehicle responds to winter conditions, especially if it has anti-lock brakes (ABS) or traction control.



6. Be Aware of Black Ice

- **Hazard:** Black ice is hard to see and can be especially dangerous, as it makes the road surface extremely slick.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Be cautious on bridges and overpasses:** These areas freeze first and may remain icy even when the road is clear.
 - **Drive slowly:** Always reduce your speed in areas where black ice may form, such as shaded spots, bridges, and intersections.
 - **Look for clues:** Watch for wet or glossy-looking roads that may indicate ice.

7. Emergency Procedures

- **Hazard:** If you become stranded or are involved in an accident, it's crucial to know how to stay safe.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Stay with your vehicle:** If you're stranded, stay in your car where you're more visible and protected from the elements.
 - **Use your emergency flashers:** Turn on your emergency flashers to alert other drivers.
 - **Call for help:** Contact roadside assistance or emergency services if you're stuck or involved in an accident.



- **Stay warm:** If you're stuck for an extended period, use blankets or extra clothing to keep warm. Never run the engine for extended periods in an enclosed space to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

8. Avoid Driving in Severe Weather (When Possible)

- **Hazard:** Snowstorms, blizzards, and extreme cold can create dangerous driving conditions.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Monitor weather conditions:** Check the forecast and avoid traveling during severe weather events whenever possible.
 - **Postpone non-essential trips:** If you don't need to be on the road, it's best to stay home during a storm or when road conditions are poor.



Conclusion

Winter driving presents many unique challenges, but by preparing your vehicle, adjusting your driving habits, and knowing how to handle winter conditions, you can greatly reduce the risk of accidents. Always stay aware of the weather and road conditions, drive cautiously, and keep safety a top priority.

Remember: **Arriving alive is the most important thing.**

