

## “For Safety’s Sake - Do Something”

### Winter Travel Safety



The holidays are fast approaching and so is the need to prepare and protect yourself during the hazardous winter driving ahead. Your car needs to be mechanically fit and you need to be mentally prepared for the travel ahead of you.

**Your car needs to be winterized** and running at peak performance for safe winter driving. Have a strong battery, fluids checked and full, fresh windshield wipers, and good tires for traction and control. Now is a good time to have all of the car’s systems checked before the first surprise snow and ice storm hit. Keep the gas tank full and your cell phone charged.

**Always check the weather and plan accordingly** - expect the unexpected. Program your car radio for traffic reports and emergency messages and check the weather apps on your phone. Let others know your route and travel times and give yourself extra time to arrive at your destination. Keep a minimum of extra clothing, a blanket, high calorie non-perishable food, and a first aid kit in your car. Depending on your travels, you will likely need to customize your survival kit.

**Prepare yourself.** Stay rested - stay alert. Driving in ice and snow requires you to be mentally alert and rely on past driving experience to analyze situations and stay safe. Visibility is often less, while reaction and stopping times are greater, during winter driving. Slow down, increase your distance between cars, and avoid texting and talking on the phone when driving in winter conditions.

**Protect yourself.** Always buckle up and make sure your passengers are, too. Slow down and leave plenty of room for snow plows to pass by, as they may cover your windshield with plowed snow as they pass, possibly eliminating visibility until your wipers can clear the snow. If your vehicle breaks down, pull as far off of the road as possible. Stay in the car and call for help. For road emergencies call 911.

For more helpful hints about winter car health and travel safety check out:

*Car Talk, Winter Driving Tips:* <http://www.cartalk.com/content/winter-driving-tips-Z>

*Car and Driver, Winter Driving Guide:* <http://www.caranddriver.com/features/winter-driving-guide-tips-to-survive-the-snow-and-ice-feature>

#### If A Blizzard Traps You In The Car

- Pull off the highway. Turn on hazard lights and hang a distress flag.
- Remain in your vehicle.
- Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by.
- Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. Open a downwind window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. Try not to waste battery power.
- Huddle with passengers and use your coat for a blanket.
- One person should be awake at all times to look for rescue crews.
- Eat regularly and drink ample fluids.
- Turn on the inside light at night so rescuers can see you.
- If stranded in a remote area, stomp large block letters in an open area spelling out HELP or SOS and line with rocks or tree limbs.
- Leave the car, if necessary, once the blizzard passes.