

Winter-Wise Your Driving

With the winter weather upon us there are a few things drivers can do to make their travel safer for all.

Check equipment: Check tires for adequate tread depth and proper inflation. Replace worn windshield wiper blades. Fill windshield washer with a nonfreezing cleaning fluid. Check and replace defective lights. Check fluid levels including oil and anti freeze. Check and replace worn hoses and belts.

Plan trips: **Listen to weather and traffic reports and allow extra travel time. Avoid unnecessary trips by making a plan to accomplish multiple tasks while you are out. Advise a family member or friend of your plans and your route. Plan for alternate routes if needed. Call 911 for true emergencies only. Call 1-800-695- ROAD or from your cellular phone 511 for current road conditions. For Ferry information, call 1-800-84FERRY.**

Plan for the unexpected: Carry warm clothes or blankets. Keep extra nonperishable food and drink in the vehicle with you in the event you are stranded away from your residence. If you have infants in your vehicle, plan to keep extra baby formula and diapers. Consider medications. Think of optional places to stay. Keep phone numbers of friends and relatives with you in your vehicle.

Equipment: During winter months drivers should consider carrying some additional equipment in their vehicles. Tire chains, shovel, first aid supplies, communications equipment (cell phone, citizen band radio), gloves, flashlight, and an ice scraper are good to have in your vehicle.

Driving Tips: ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT AND SLOW DOWN. Increase your following distance. Avoid unnecessary lane changes. Warm your vehicle prior to driving to avoid stalling and allow windows to properly defrost. Keep your fuel tank at least half full. Drive with your headlights on to increase visibility.

If you are unable to continue driving due to icy conditions, make every effort to move your vehicle off the roadway. Many times drivers leave their vehicles in the traveled portion of the roadway.

Remember you are responsible for keeping your vehicle on the road and avoiding collisions. Adjust your speed according to the conditions and increase your following distance. The only difference between someone who drives too fast sliding off of the road hitting nothing and someone driving too fast, sliding across the center line and killing someone in a head on collision, is luck. The cause of these two collisions is the same; speed, and you will be cited, no excuses, no exceptions.

If you are involved in a collision, stay in your vehicle. Generally more collisions will occur if the roadway is icy. The safest place is in your vehicle. If you collide with another vehicle and there are no injuries, move the vehicles to a safe place to exchange information. Keep in mind that emergency resources will be operating at capacity when conditions are hazardous. If you drive an all wheel drive vehicle, remember they do not STOP any better than two wheel drive vehicles.

If road and weather conditions are not favorable and you do not have to go out, stay home. If you must go out, be prepared and be patient.

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