

Winter Driving

Introduction:

Hazards associated with driving during winter weather conditions, including driving on wet, icy or snow-packed roads increase, making it risky to drive in these adverse conditions. It is important to prepare for driving in these conditions as emergencies can happen at any time. Preparation can help with how one handles the emergency and makes for a safer trip.

Before you venture out in adverse conditions, prepare yourself mentally before you get behind the wheel. Take time to evaluate the situation, and prepare to act quickly when making decisions, and avoid all distractions that would impair your decision making, leading to an accident.

Discussion Points:

- Car Maintenance – check battery, fluid levels, hoses, tires, lights and windshield wipers. Keep fuel level above a half-tank during the winter months.
- Emergency Supplies – sand, shovel, brush, scraper, warning devices, tire chains, jumper cables, tool kit, first aid kit, blankets, warm clothing, water, food, medications, string and scissors and a compass.
- Plan Your Route – check weather forecast, map and directions, allow extra time for arrival, and inform others of your plans.
- Learn to Drive in Snow and on Ice – understand how to handle your vehicle including steering and braking, slow down and allow more distance between vehicles, and avoid stopping.

Discussion:

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), you should reduce your speed by 1/3 on wet roads and by 1/2 or more on snow-packed roads.

It is always better to avoid putting yourself in a dangerous situation, if you do not have to go out in hazardous winter weather conditions or if in doubt, stay home! However, if you must travel in adverse conditions, be aware of your surroundings and make good decisions. Know how and when to recognize danger, and when it is time to pull off the road into a protected rest area and wait for the conditions to improve before continuing your trip.

As always, be safe out there!

