

T'IS THE SEASON: HOW TO PREPARE FOR WINTER DRIVING



When the first snow hits the ground, we find ourselves getting used to colder temperatures, slick road conditions again and adjusting to winter weather.

Is your vehicle equipped for a roadside emergency? Do you remember the do's and don'ts of driving on icy roads or how to best approach a plow truck? We've compiled a list of things to remember and do as snowy and icy conditions begin in earnest.

Equip your vehicle with an emergency box:

- Small snow shovel, broom and ice scraper
- Sand or kitty litter in case you need to increase traction when your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- Keep layers handy: Gloves, mittens, hats, winter coat, blankets, emergency blankets, socks
- Make sure to be seen: Flashlight, batteries, reflective vests, emergency flares, headlamp
- Non-perishable food supply like granola bars for quick energy
- Water (might freeze)
- Medication and first aid kit
- Carry your cell phone and keep it charged while driving, stock your vehicle with an additional power bank and charger cable

Familiarize yourself with your vehicle:

- When the first snow sticks to the roads, try your car on an empty parking lot to get a sense of how it handles in winter driving conditions.
- Pump your brakes, get used to the feeling of skidding and pulsating pedals when regaining control of your vehicle
- Know when to use and how to turn on your 4WD.

Before driving in the snow:

- Make sure all scheduled maintenance is up to date.
- Have your mechanic check belts, fluids and hoses to help reduce the risk of a mechanical breakdown.
- Check your tire treads - 6/32" is the minimum recommended tread depth for winter driving.
- Make sure front and rear wipers are in good condition and that the blades aren't worn.
- Clean off your lights and signals, and make sure your windshield wipers are cleared from ice.

- Check your windshield wiper fluid level and make sure the nozzles aren't covered in ice and that you can use it properly.
- Clean off your car's hood, roof and trunk from snow and ice. – It's the law in NH (Jessica's Law) and can save a life!

Driving in winter weather:

- Take your time and adjust your speed to account for lower traction when driving on ice or snow.
- Keep more distance to the vehicle in front of you.
- Know whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system and learn how to use it properly. Antilock brake systems prevent your wheels from locking up during braking.
- If you have antilock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure to the brake pedal. If you don't have antilock brakes, you may need to pump your brakes if you feel your wheels starting to lockup.
- Drive only if necessary, if there's severe weather in the forecast.
- Regular rules apply even more in winter weather: Don't text and drive, do obey the speed limit and always drive sober.
- Be careful on bridges and overpasses as they are commonly the first areas to become icy.

Driving etiquette around snowplows:

- Don't crowd a plow or travel beside it: They are here to help. Please treat them with respect.
- Plows may travel slowly, make wide turns, overlap lanes and exit the road frequently.
- Be patient: The road behind a plow truck is safer to drive on. Keep your distance from the plow, at least 200 feet. A snowplow operator's field-of-vision is limited; if you can't see the mirrors, the plow can't see you. If you are too close, your vehicle might get hit by de-icing materials.
- Don't tailgate or try to pass. If you really must pass a plow, never pass on the right.

