



A Moment of Self-Reliant Wisdom

Topic: Winter Driving Tips

The best advice for driving in bad weather is to not drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination.

Winter weather is never predictable. Expect the worst conditions and be prepared by having an emergency kit in your car. The following items may be of use should you find yourself stranded during a snowstorm:



BE PREPARED - Have an Emergency Kit

- ✓ **Flashlight** -With extra batteries.
- ✓ **Blankets, Extra Clothing, Water & Snacks**- It is a good idea to take along water, food, warm blankets or sleeping bag, and extra clothing. A lengthy delay will make you glad you have them.
- ✓ **Winter Coat, Boots or Shoes**- These are especially important should you need to leave your vehicle to apply chains or get unstuck.
- ✓ **Gloves**-Helpful to protect your hands should you need to install chains.
- ✓ **Clean, Dry Towel**-To dry your hands after installing snow chains.
- ✓ **Ice Scraper/Deicer**-To keep windows clear of snow/ice for improved visibility.
- ✓ **Shovel**-To free your vehicle should you get snowed in.
- ✓ **Broom**-A small broom or brush can be used to clear snow off your vehicle.
- ✓ **Spare Key- (in your pocket)** Many motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when stopping to install chains or clear windows.
- ✓ **Sand/Kitty Litter**-Sand or kitty litter can help with traction should you get stuck in mud or snow.
- ✓ **First Aid Kit**- You should always have a first aid kit in your vehicle.



WINTERIZE YOUR VEHICLE

Check your brakes, windshield wipers, exhaust system and heater/defroster to make sure they are in good working condition.

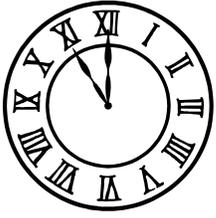
- ☑ **Antifreeze**- Check your radiator fluid level and add antifreeze/coolant as needed.
- ☑ **Windshield Wipers**-Wiper blades should be replaced, if needed, adding a winter formula windshield wiper fluid will help de-ice your windshield.
- ☑ **Tires**- Make sure your tires are properly inflated and that the tread is in good condition. Snow /studded tires help to increase traction in snowy or icy conditions.
- ☑ **Chains**- Always carry chains. They should be the correct size for your car/tires and in proper working order. Chains must be installed on drive wheels, so you need to know if your vehicle has front or rear wheel drive. Cable-type chains are acceptable, but they may not provide as much traction as traditional chains.



BE INFORMED-Check road conditions before traveling, call **511** or **1-888-432-7623**, or online at www.511.Idaho.gov

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

CONT. page 2



☑ **Allow Enough Time-** trips can take longer during winter, especially if you encounter storm conditions or icy roads. Get an early start and allow plenty of time to get to your destination.

☑ **Black Ice-**The temperature does not have to be below freezing in order for ice to form on road surfaces. Ice can form any time the air temperature drops below 40 degrees, especially when it's windy. Bridges and underpasses can be especially hazardous. Any low or shaded area surrounded by landscaping, or with a nearby source of water, can also have icy-spots. Black ice is nearly invisible. Drive cautiously.

☑ **Don't Panic-** If you begin to slide while driving on snow or ice, slowly take your foot off the gas pedal, do not use your brakes, and steer your vehicle in the direction you wish to travel. If you must use brakes, gently pump the brake pedal and do not allow them to lock up. If your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock (ABS) brakes, apply firm, steady pressure without pumping.

☑ **Be Observant-** Visibility is often limited during poor weather. Slow down and keep a constant watch for other vehicles. When following snow removal equipment, maintain a safe distance and watch for ice and other debris. Do not pass snowplows unless the operator directs you to.

☑ **Keep Your Fuel Tank Full-** It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad storm. You may also be in for a long delay if bad weather forces a highway closure.

☑ **Slow Down and Use Your Seat Belt-**Most winter accidents are the result of driving too fast for the conditions. Avoid speeding and buckle up for safety. Use low gears to slow your vehicle-avoid using the brakes if possible. Remember that having four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive improves climbing tractions but does not help to stop your vehicle.

☑ **Turn Off Cruise Control-**Don't use your cruise control when driving in snow or icy/wet road conditions. Black ice can fool you quickly. Maintaining manual control of your vehicle will allow you to react to sudden changes.

☑ **Keep Windows Clear-** Passing vehicles can spray your car with mud and slush. Utilize your vehicle's windshield wipers and defroster to keep your windshield clear. When driving through falling snow, turn on your low beam headlights for extra visibility.

☑ **Stay With Your Vehicle-** When stalled or stuck, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Do not attempt to walk out for help. Put your flashers on, and be aware of possible exhaust or carbon monoxide problems.

☑ **If You Get Stuck...**-Do not spin your wheels, this will only dig you in deeper. Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way. Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out. Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car. Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel, or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction. Try rocking the vehicle. (Check your owner's manual first-it can damage the transmission on some vehicles.) Shift forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.

