



## Get the Facts: Winter Driving Challenges

### In a Nutshell

Minnesota winters challenge even experienced drivers to up their safety games.

### What should I know about safe winter driving?

More than any other season, winter requires us to team up with our vehicles to stay safe. In addition to the basic safe driving habits we practice all year long – buckling up, driving alert and sober, and driving at a safe and legal speed – it's about getting ourselves and our cars or trucks in the right shape and ourselves in a mindset to tackle the challenges of snow, ice, frigid temperatures and short, dark days.

### Getting you and your vehicle winter road ready

- Keep an emergency survival kit in the car. Emergency items can include:
  - Working flashlight and road flares
  - Ice scraper, snow brush and shovel
  - Jumper cables, tow chain and a toolkit
  - Blanket, warm clothes, boots, hat and gloves
  - Metal bucket or coffee can, small candle and matches or a disposable lighter
  - Brightly colored square of cloth such as a bandanna
  - Basic first aid kit
  - Large plastic garbage bag; use to insulate feet, legs and torso
  - Bag of sand, salt or cat litter to use for stuck tire traction
  - High energy, non-perishable foods (granola bars, unsalted nuts, dried fruits)
- Brush all the snow off the headlights and taillights, windows, hood, roof and rear deck to ensure you won't struggle with snow blowback and other drivers can see you.
- Adjust your speed to the conditions and increase following distances.
- Check that your cell phone is fully charged for use during emergencies. Because driving requires your full attention, be sure to find a safe place to pull over when you need to make a call.

#### *Winter Driving Tips*

- *Stay home if you can.*
- *Slow down*
- *Accelerate and decelerate slowly*
- *Increase your following distance*
- *Know your brakes.*
- *Don't stop if you can avoid it.*
- *Don't power up hills.*
- *Don't stop going up a hill.*

If you're stranded





- Stay with your vehicle. Don't try to walk to safety - you're safer staying in your vehicle.
- Call for help on your cell phone.
- Make yourself visible. Tie a brightly colored (preferably red) banner or cloth on your antenna or hang it out a window. After the snowfall ends, raise the hood of your engine to indicate trouble.
- Run vehicle for 10 minutes every hour. Keep the exhaust pipe clear to prevent fumes from entering the vehicle, and always leave a down-wind window open slightly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, keep the radiator free of snow to prevent overheating.
- Keep moving. Move your arms, fingers, legs and toes periodically to keep blood circulating and stay warm, but don't overdo it to avoid a chilling sweat. If you are with others, huddle together for warmth and sleep in shifts.

**Sources:** National Safety Council  
American Automobile Association

