SAFETY BULLETIN

Proper Steps to Take In Preparing For Winter Driving Conditions

Make sure your vehicle is prepared for winter driving.

Step 1: Check the Tires.
Tires are the most important aspect of keeping your vehicle under control in snow and ice conditions. Traction tires with ample tread depth provide the best control in snow and ice conditions. The tread depth and condition is also vital in keeping control of the steering.

Step 2: Check the Fuel
Drive with a full tank of gas so that if stranded, the heater can remain in use for as long as possible.

Step 3: Maximize Visibility.
Vehicle mirrors and windows should be clean for maximum visibility.

Step 4: Turn the Lights On.
Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.

Step 5: Do Not Use Cruise Control.
Do not use cruise control on snow or ice covered roads.

Step 6: Bridges, Overpasses infrequently traveled roads.
Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways such as bridges and overpasses.

Step 7: Do not “pump” the brakes.
If your vehicle is equipped with ABS brakes, keep your foot on the brake pedal while maintaining firm and continuous pressure. Do not “pump” the brakes. A mechanical sound and vibration or increased resistance in the brake pedal indicates the ABS is working. Hold the brake pedal down and the anti-lock system will work for you.

Step 8: Drive slowly.
Driving too quickly is the main cause of winter accidents. Be sure to drive slowly and carefully on snow and ice covered roads.

Step 9: Pay attention.
Maneuvers are more difficult to make in the snow. Be sure to anticipate what your next move is going to be to give yourself plenty of room for turns and stopping.

Step 10: Do not tailgate.
While tailgating is a bad idea under normal driving conditions, it is much worse in winter weather. Stopping takes longer on snow and ice covered roads than on dry pavement. Be sure to leave plenty of room between your vehicle and the one in front of you. A good rule of thumb is to leave four vehicle lengths between you and the vehicle in front of you for every 10 mph you are driving.

Step 11: Brake before making turns.
It is difficult to steer vehicles while applying the brakes in snowy conditions. Smoothly step on your vehicle’s brakes to reduce speed before entering turns. Once you have turned the corner, you can accelerate again.

Step 12: Drive smoothly.
Snow and ice covered roads are much less forgiving than dry pavement. Do not make any abrupt turns or stops while driving. This will often cause your vehicle to lose control and skid.

**Step 13: Be familiar with your vehicle.**
It is always a good idea to be familiar with your vehicle's driving dynamics. This is especially true when driving on snow or ice. Also, be aware of the weight condition of your vehicle. As your load and weight diminish the handling of the vehicle in snow and ice will change.

**Step 14: Learn how to control skids.**
While it is best practiced in a driving school or on a closed course, it is not a bad idea to practice controlling skids in your vehicle so that you know how to react if it ever happens under real world driving conditions. The procedure for correcting a skid is the same for both rear-wheel-drive and front-wheel-drive vehicles. If your vehicle begins to lose traction and the rear wheels begin sliding sideways, ease off the gas pedal. Turn your steering wheel in a controlled manner in the same direction the rear of the vehicle is sliding. When traction is regained, straighten the vehicle and proceed slowly.