

SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER DRIVING

The potential for bad weather at this time of year brings with it an increased threat of vehicle accidents. This is the most dangerous time of the year. Inclement weather is a major factor in many of the serious accidents that occur each year.

It is important to be alert at all times when driving, but it is even more important during this time of the year. The days are shorter reducing the amount of sunlight. There is an increase in the amount of rain. Snow storms can come up suddenly and cold weather can cause icy conditions. The possibility of fog and sun glare also increases, making driving much more difficult and dangerous. We have little control over the weather, but we can adjust the way we drive, be alert and apply good driving sense.

The following is a list of safe driving tips that we can follow. Read through each area carefully and incorporate these into your winter driving behavior:

DRIVE DEFENSIVELY

- Stay on the lookout
- Be prepared for possible hazards
- Obey all traffic laws
- Error on the side caution
- Anticipate the action of others
- Always be alert at stop signs and traffic lights
- Stay informed on the weather conditions
- Maintain a safe distance behind the vehicle in front of you, this distance should be increased on icy or wet roads
- Avoid distractions
- Never drive if suffering from a lack of sleep
- Keep the windows cracked to allow fresh air to enter the vehicle
- Leave yourself a way out at all times
- Keep your vehicle in good repair at all times
- Anticipate the actions of other drivers
- Do not drive while impaired in any way
- Eliminate distractions as much as possible

COMMON SENSE DRIVING TIPS

- Adjust your time schedule for bad weather
- Slow down
- Anticipate increased stopping distance on cold, icy, snow covered and wet roads. Slick roads can increase braking distance by more than 30 feet at 55 mph and 60 feet at 60 mph
- Pump the brakes if a sudden stop is required
- Remember the bridges and areas shaded by trees will maintain ice and frost longer and also freeze quicker
- Use your low headlight beams when driving in snow to reduce the amount of reflected light
- Keep the inside windows clean and free of fog
- Try to avoid skids, however, if you do skid remember to:
 - Take your foot off of the accelerator
 - Do not apply the brakes
 - Keep the wheels turned in the direction of the skid
 - Straighten your wheels slowly as you come out of the skid
 - Gently slow down
- Inspect your vehicle regularly
- Make sure the tires are in good condition with adequate tread
- Use headlights in inclement weather in the daytime
- Check battery on a periodic basis
- If necessary pull over in severe weather conditions until the weather conditions improve

SAFETY TIPS FOR SUB-FREEZING WEATHER

- Wear a complete set of outdoor winter clothing, including good boots and face mask
- Check the vehicle's heater
- Use freeze resistant wiper blades
- Maintain proper tire pressure
- Get an engine block heater if your vehicle will set outside
- Have a set of good gloves, face mask, hat, ear muffs and wool blanket available
- Have a cellular phone available in case of an emergency
- Have other safety supplies available such as:
 - Warning devices
 - Small snow shovel
 - Ice scraper
 - Flashlight
 - Booster cables
 - Small bag of sand
 - Towing chain or cable
 - Traction mats
 - First Aid kit
 - Jack and lug wrench

RAIN, SNOW, ICE, FOG AND SUNGLARE

RAIN

- Always use your windshield wipers
- Coat your windshield with a rain clearing solution
- Slow down especially on curves and keep an extra space between the vehicle in front of you
- Avoid sudden moves and emergency stops if possible
- Be aware of the possibility of hydroplaning in heavy rain
- Drive slowly through puddles and keep gentle pressure on the brakes to prevent the brake lines from getting wet

SNOW AND ICE

- Always accelerate slowly and smoothly
- Avoid sudden turns that might cause a skid
- Be alert to black ice that forms on bridges and in shaded areas
- Drive on fresh snow where possible if you suspect ice in the tracks left by vehicles before you
- Pay attention to road warning signs
- Drive slowly
- When braking start early, let off accelerator slowly and apply the brakes gently
- Never brake and try to steer at the same time
- When going down a hill gently apply the brakes to maintain a slower more controlled descent
- When climbing a hill keep plenty of distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Do not accelerate on the incline if possible.

SUNGLARE

- Keep the windshield free of dirt and grime
- Use the sun visor
- Have a good pair of sunglasses available to reduce the glare
- Reduce speed
- Try to avoid looking directly into the glare

FOG

- Gradually reduce your speed if you can not see in front of you
- Turn on your low beams
- Turn off the radio and listen carefully. Roll down the windows a crack.
- If necessary use your horn to let drivers know of your presence
- Don't stop unless absolutely necessary
- Pull over to the side of the road if necessary and turn out lights and turn on flashers