

# Driving in Wintry Conditions

## Special Topics in Safety Management

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Whether you drive for a living or only to and from work, winter weather conditions provide a challenge for even the most seasoned driver. That's why it's important to prepare ahead for icy or snowy weather. Even southern states experience light snow or ice on occasion. And tests have shown that warmer ice is more slippery than colder ice.

### Before you start

Make sure to have an overall tune-up. Check your battery clamps for corrosion—a frequent cause of not starting in cold weather. Brakes should be checked and adjusted as necessary. Wipers should be in good working order. If they start to skip or streak, replace them. Be sure you have plenty of wiper fluid as well. Check to see that your heater, defroster, and rear window defogger are working properly. Add winter-weight motor oil, if you're not already using all-season oil. Keep your gas tank half full for unexpected emergencies. This will also prevent your gas lines from freezing.

Tires are of particular concern in snow or ice. All season tires perform well under most weather conditions (even rain), but consider snow tires if you will be driving in deep snow. Check the air pressure often—cold weather can cause it to drop one pound per square inch for each ten-degree drop in temperature. If mountain driving in heavy snow is contemplated, try using tire chains.

### Emergency supplies

To be fully prepared for emergencies, a winter driving kit should include the following:

- ice-scraper, snow brush and snow shovel
- booster cables, flashlight, and extra batteries
- warning devices such as flares or triangles
- first aid kit
- extra warm clothing and blankets
- bag of abrasive material such as sand, salt or kitty litter
- traction mats
- high energy, non-spoilable foods such as granola bars, nuts, raisins and water
- good sunglasses to avoid the glare of snow and sunshine

By [being prepared](#), you will reduce your risk of accidents or injury, and will be better able to handle vehicle problems should they come up.

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