



Winter Driving Preparedness

The first step to driving carefully during the winter season is to always be aware of changing weather conditions from your starting location to your destination. Check out our [Road Trip Planner](#), a helpful tool that provides weather information for your drive, including forecasted conditions and severe alerts along the road.

Car Maintenance

Make sure to prepare your vehicle before the winter season begins. The following handy steps will help you ensure that your vehicle is safe to drive during winter weather:

1. Check your brakes, transmission and tires
2. Check that your battery and ignition system is in top condition and that battery terminals are clean
3. Check radiator coolant and sturdiness of hoses and belts
4. Check your anti-freeze and thermostat to avoid freezing
5. Check your windshield wipers and deicing washer fluid
6. Check your headlights, tail and brake lights, blinkers and emergency flasher
7. Check your exhaust system, heater and defroster
8. Check fuel and air filters
9. Check your oil and power steering fluids
10. Properly lubricate door locks that may be prone to freezing



Driving Safety

- Before beginning your trip, check the current road conditions and weather forecast. For statewide highway information 24 hours a day checkout your state's Department of Transportation
- Keep your car's windows, mirrors and lights clear of snow and ice
- Buckle up
- Allow yourself plenty of time to make it to your destination
- Be aware of sleet and freezing rain
- Be aware of potentially icy areas
- Brake early and slowly and avoid slamming on the brakes
- Keep a safe distance of at least five seconds behind other vehicles and trucks that are plowing the road
- When driving on ice and snow, do not use cruise control and avoid abrupt steering maneuvers
- When merging into traffic, **take it slow** — Sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide
- Don't pass a snowplow or spreader unless it is absolutely necessary — treat these as you would emergency response vehicles
- Keep an emergency winter driving kit in your car
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season. This is good for emergency preparedness and it keeps the fuel line from freezing.
- Most importantly, drive smart!

WINTER DRIVING SAFETY KIT



Blankets or a sleeping bag



Flashlight or battery-powered lantern with extra batteries



Battery-powered radio



Jumper or booster cables



Emergency flares



Matches



Extra clothing, such as boots, hats and gloves or mittens



A shovel and rope



Tow chain



Bottled water or juice and nonperishable high-energy foods



First-aid kit with necessary medications and a pocket knife



Road salt, sand or non-clumping cat litter for tire traction



Cell phone and car charger



Ice scraper and snow brush or small broom



Spare tire, tire repair kit and pump