

Winter driving tips

Is your vehicle ready for winter driving?

Proper maintenance for your automobile is always important, but this is especially true during the winter.

- Check your coolant. Make sure the coolant level is correct and that it is mixed according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Use a lighter weight engine oil, like 10W40 for easier starts.
- Add dry gas to fuel to prevent the fuel line from freezing.
- Keep your washer fluid tank filled (store extra fluid in your trunk) and be sure the fluid is mixed with an antifreeze agent.
- Inspect your wiper blades to be sure they are working properly.
- Have your battery tested and replace it if it is not working at its peak. Cold weather can run down a battery quickly.
- Make sure tire pressure (including the spare) meets manufacturer's specifications and that tire treads are not worn excessively.

How can I make my car ready each time I drive?

Clear your entire vehicle of ice and snow before you drive. This includes all the windows, roof, hood and trunk. Debris that comes off your vehicle while driving can be hazardous to other drivers. Warm up your car before you drive in order to ensure it is completely defrosted. Do this in a well-ventilated area to avoid carbon monoxide buildup. Have a towel on hand to wipe off lights should they become dirty or covered with snow.



What precautions can I take during winter driving conditions?

- First and foremost, if you don't have to go out, don't.
- If you must drive during a winter storm, turn on your low beams, which provide better illumination in snow than high beams.
- Do not use cruise control on slick or wet roads.
- Slow down. Posted speed limits are set for ideal driving conditions.
- Go easy on starts, turns and stops.
- Don't brake hard in icy or snowy conditions. Use threshold braking by applying brakes firmly just short of wheel lockup then ease off the brake pedal slightly. Press down firmly again until you stop. Applying steady pressure is better than pumping the brakes.
- If your car has antilock brakes, the process is different. Press firmly and do not let up.

Four-wheel drive vehicles can be safer in slippery conditions, but they don't stop any faster than other cars.

- Anticipate potential danger such as icy bridges or drifting snow.
- Leave more room between your car and other vehicles on the road.
- If you go into a skid, do not panic. Ease off the accelerator and don't lock up the brakes. Steer in the direction you want the car to go and then straighten the wheel when you feel the car moving in the desired direction.

What should I do if I break down?

Because of the cold, winter breakdowns can be deadly, especially when traveling in remote areas. Consider carrying extra-warm clothes, blankets or a sleeping bag, matches and a two-way radio or cell phone. Carrying food and water also is a good idea.



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