

## January 2018: Winter Driving and Vehicle Preparation Safety

### Winter Driving Safety Vehicle Preparation

#### Routine precautions help you avoid starting problems:

- ✓ Get an engine tune-up in the fall.
- ✓ Be sure all lights are in good working order.
- ✓ Have the brakes adjusted.
- ✓ Remember to switch to winter-weight oil if you aren't already (using all-season oil).
- ✓ Battery and voltage regulator should be checked.
- ✓ Make sure battery connections are good.
- ✓ Be sure all fluids are at proper levels  
Make sure wiper blades are cleaning properly.
- ✓ Antifreeze should not only be strong enough to prevent freezing, but fresh enough to prevent rust.
- ✓ The exhaust system: Have the exhaust system fully checked for leaks that could send carbon monoxide into your vehicle.
- ✓ Heating and cooling system check your radiator and hoses for cracks and leaks.

#### Essential Safety Supplies:

- ✓ Snow shovel.
- ✓ Scraper with a brush on one end.
- ✓ Tow chain or strap.
- ✓ Warning device (flares or reflective triangles).
- ✓ Flashlight (with extra batteries)
- ✓ Abrasive material (cat litter, sand, salt, or traction mats).
- ✓ Compass, Warning light or road flares, Booster cables
- ✓ First Aid Kit



### Winter Deaths:

Everyone is potentially at risk during winter storms. The actual threat to you depends on your specific situation. Recent observations indicate the following: (Related to ice and snow)

- About 70% occur in automobiles.
- About 25% are people caught out in the storm.
- Majority are males over 40 years old.

### Winter Weather:

**Flurries** - Light snow falling for short durations. No accumulation or light dusting is all that is expected.

**Showers** - Snow falling at varying intensities for brief periods of time. Some accumulation is possible.

**Squalls** - Brief, intense snow showers accompanied by strong, gusty winds. Accumulation may be significant. Snow squalls are best known in the Great Lakes region.

**Blowing Snow** - Wind-driven snow that reduces visibility and causes significant drifting. Blowing snow may be snow that is falling and/or loose snow on the ground picked up by the wind.

**Heavy snow** - 5 inches or more in 12 hours, or 6-7 inches or more in 24 hours, and snow falling reduces visibility up to a quarter of a mile or less.



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## Winter Weather Ice :

- Expect icy conditions any time the outside air temperature reaches 40 degrees F or lower. Although water freezes at 32 degrees F, road surface can freeze when the air temperature drops to 40 degrees or less.
- An important place to watch for this condition is on bridges. Bridge surfaces are exposed to the wind and cool off faster than the rest of the road.
- You should also prepare for icy conditions on roads through shaded areas where a cold wind can freeze a wet road surface.
- Snow that has been compacted during the day and has slightly melted will freeze at night. Usually this white ice can be seen on the road. When traveling on white ice, drive very slowly. If you cannot find a place to park until conditions improve, install tire chains for better traction.
- Slick trick -- Watch for slippery spots called glare ice. These may appear on an otherwise clear road in shaded areas. If you see a patch of ice ahead, brake before reaching it and try not to brake while actually on the ice.
- Black ice fools drivers. Its shine tricks them into thinking it's water on the road. What they may not realize is that condensation, such as dew, freezes when temperatures reach 32 degrees or below. This forms an extra-thin layer of ice on the road.
- This shiny ice surface is one of the most slippery road conditions. Black ice is likely to form first under bridges and overpasses, in shady spots and at intersections.



## Follow the Ten-Point Plan for Safer Winter Driving:

1. Allow extra time for your journey and reduce your speed.
2. Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front and be certain you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.
3. If visibility is seriously reduced by fog, use dipped headlights and rear fog lights. Switch on your wipers to keep your windscreen clear.
4. Remember to turn fog lights off when they are no longer needed as they can be a distraction to other drivers.
5. Remember the obvious - you can see snow, but you can't always see ice.
6. Avoid sudden braking, accelerating too quickly and harsh steering in slippery condition.
7. Keep your windscreen clear of snow and check from time to time that there is not a build up of snow on your lights.
8. Carry a shovel, extra warm clothing, a blanket, a snack and a drink – especially if you are traveling through isolated areas
9. If you are going on a long journey, advise someone of your destination and what time you expect to arrive.
10. If you feel uncomfortable driving in bad weather, consider whether your journey is really necessary or whether you can go by an alternative to the car.



References: MDOT and AAA