



Adventist Risk
Management® Inc.

SAFE DRIVING IN COLD WEATHER

While the safest strategy is to avoid driving in bad weather conditions, here are ways to improve your chances of arriving safely.

Before Your Trip

1. Check weather and travel conditions before heading out. If weather is very unsafe, wait for conditions to improve.
2. Make sure you have an emergency survival kit prepped for the current weather conditions and ready to go in your vehicle. It may be helpful to place it in the backseat where you can access it easily if needed.
3. Take a fully charged cell phone and car charger with you. If you do a lot of driving in areas with poor reception, consider using a citizen's band (CB) radio.
4. Make sure you have enough fuel. Try to keep the fuel tank at least half-full. This also prevents ice from forming in your gas tank.
5. Wear warm clothes that do not restrict movement.
6. Allow extra time for travel.
7. Always tell someone where you are going, the route you plan to take and when you expect to arrive. Check in along the way so they will know where to search for you should you become stranded.
8. See and be seen. Remove all snow from your vehicle's hood, roof, windows, and lights. Clear all windows of frost and fog.
3. Always add an extra margin of distance when following behind snow plows on the highway.
4. If driving becomes too risky, turn back or look for a safe place to stop until conditions improve.
5. If weather worsens and you must travel below the speed limit, turn on your emergency flashers.
6. If visibility becomes poor, find a place to safely pull off the road as soon as you can. It's best to stop at a rest area or exit the roadway and take shelter in a building.

On Your Way

1. Stay on main roads and drive carefully. Match your speed to the road and weather conditions.
2. Avoid passing another vehicle when weather and road conditions are bad.
7. If you can't exit, pull off the road as far as possible. Exit the vehicle from the passenger side, to reduce the risk of being hit by other vehicles passing by.



If Stranded

Stay calm if your vehicle becomes stuck in snow or the highway is blocked. Do not do any heavy lifting, shoveling, or pushing in the cold. If your vehicle is not at risk of being hit by other drivers, stay inside so you have shelter. Going out into a storm puts you at risk of getting lost, or suffering from frostbite or hypothermia.

You should also:

- To keep carbon monoxide from filling your vehicle, make sure the tailpipe is not blocked by snow and keep a window sheltered from the wind open a bit to give you a good supply of fresh air.
- Set out a hazard warning light, triangle, or flares.
- Run your motor as little as possible.
- Use a survival candle for heat if you have one, instead of the vehicle's heater.
- Use the dome light only as needed. (Overuse of headlights may run your battery down).
- Wear a hat, since you can lose up to 60 percent of your body heat through your head.
- Exercise your arms and legs often.
- Watch for traffic or rescue personnel.
- Stay awake.

Avoiding Collisions

Vehicles do not all respond in the same way on icy, slippery roads. Learn how to handle your vehicle in all types of weather. You may also consider taking a winter driving course.

In extreme weather, avoid using overdrive or cruise control. Read the owner's manual to learn about your vehicle's braking system and tire traction.

Skidding

To avoid skidding, drive appropriately for road and weather conditions. Use appropriate speed according to the current road conditions.

Use caution when you brake, change lanes, make turns, and go around curves. Even careful and experienced drivers can skid. Skidding may be the result of panic braking when you are trying to avoid an obstacle on the road.

Stop Safely

Since it takes longer to stop on a slippery road, increase your following distance and pay close attention to the road as far ahead as you can see.

If you don't have anti-lock brakes (ABS), the best way to stop on a slippery road is to brake slowly and gently. If you brake too hard and cause the wheels to lock (stop turning), release the pedal just enough to get the wheels rolling. Then, brake again immediately with slightly less force than before.

ABS prevents wheels from locking and allows you to control steering during hard braking. When wheel sensors detect lock-up, the system relieves enough pressure to keep the tires rolling while you brake hard. You will feel the brake pedal rapidly pulse back against your foot and may hear some mechanical noise.

Do not lift your foot from the brake or pump the pedal. To make an emergency stop, press the brake quickly and hard. Remember, the ABS system will not shorten stopping distance.



Adventist Risk Management, Inc. wants you to be safe this winter driving season. Following these basic winter driving principles can provide a better chance of surviving and returning home safely. Find more risk management resources at AdventistRisk.org.

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