

FACT SHEET

WINTER DRIVING

The leading cause of death during winter storms is transportation accidents. Preparing your vehicle for the winter season and knowing how to react if stranded or lost on the road are the keys to safe winter driving.

Have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- Battery
- Antifreeze
- Wipers and windshield washer fluid
- Ignition system
- Thermostat
- Lights
- Flashing hazard lights
- Exhaust system
- Heater
- Brakes
- Defroster
- Oil level (*if necessary, replace existing oil with a winter grade oil or the SAE 10w30 weight variety*)

Install good winter tires.

Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.

Keep windshield scraper and small broom for ice and snow removal.

Carry a winter car kit. (See *Winter Car Kits.*)

Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.

Plan long trips carefully.

Listen to the radio or call the Highway Patrol for the latest road conditions. Always travel during daylight and, if possible, take at least one other person.

If you must go out during a winter storm, use public transportation.

Dress warmly.

Wear layers of loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing.

Carry food and water.

Store a supply of high energy "munchies" and several bottles of water.

Winter Car Kit

- Flashlights with extra batteries
- First Aid kit with pocket knife
- Several blankets
- Sleeping bags
- Extra newspapers for insulation
- Plastic bags (for sanitation)
- Matches
- Extra set of mittens, socks and a wool cap
- Small sack of sand for generating traction under wheels
- Small shovel
- Small tools (pliers, wrench, screwdriver)
- Booster cables
- Set of tire chains
- Cards, games and puzzles
- Brightly colored cloth to use as a flag

IF TRAPPED IN CAR DURING A BLIZZARD

Stay in the car!

Do not leave the care to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. You will become disoriented and lost in blowing and drifting snow.

Avoid overexertion.

Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart.

Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack.

Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. (See *Frostbite and Hypothermia*)

Display a trouble sign.

Hang a brightly colored cloth on the radio antenna and raise the car hood.

Occasionally run engine to keep warm.

Turn on the car's engine for about 10 minutes each hour.

Run the heater when the car is running. Also, turn on the car's dome light when the car is running. *Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning.* Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow and open a down-wind window slightly for ventilation.

Do minor exercises to keep up circulation.

Clap hands and move arms and legs occasionally. Try not to stay in one position for too long.

If more than one person is in the car, take turns sleeping.

For warmth, huddle together.

Use newspapers, maps and even removable car mats for added insulation.

Frostbite and Hypothermia

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure that can permanently damage its victims. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, or nose and ear lobes is a symptom of frostbite.

Hypothermia is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops due to prolonged exposure to temperatures less than 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, warm the person and seek immediate medical assistance. Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim something with caffeine in it (like coffee) or alcohol. Caffeine, a stimulant, can cause the heart to beat faster and hasten the effects the cold has on the body. Alcohol a depressant can slow the heart and also hasten the ill effects of cold body temperatures.