

Winter Vehicle Safety Reminders

- Make sure your vehicle's engine is ready for winter. (tune-up?)
- Replace old car batteries. A new battery supplies only 40% of max power at 0 degrees.
- Have a professional inspect the exhaust system, replacing any leaking parts.
- Make sure your heater/defrosters work and always use fresh air vents when using the heater.
- Test your vehicle's brakes on a deserted parking lot for even brake application and test the anti-lock system.
- Make sure you have plenty of winter window washing fluid available in the reservoir. Never use plain water as it will freeze.
- Replace regular wipers blades with winter blades designed for cold.
- Assure your tires have proper tread and pressure. Tire pressure decreases one pound for every 10-degree temperature drop. Check your tire pressure as temperatures drop or fluctuate.
- Keep your fuel tank at least half full at all times. Not only does this help prevent fuel line freeze-up but will ensure you always have enough fuel for emergency situations.
- Always dress so you will be seen outside your car, such as when you clean off your vehicle.
- Slow down and allow more distance between vehicles. Allow 8 - 10 second intervals on slick roads.
- If you start to skid, do not apply the brakes. Steer slowly into the skid and recover as the skid allows.
- When stuck in snow, do not spin your tires. Remove as much snow as possible around tires and try to drive out in a straight line. Spread sand or kitty litter in front of tires.

If You are Stranded in Your Vehicle in the Cold . . .

- Stay in your vehicle. It provides shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Don't overexert yourself. Do your best to remain relaxed.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth to your radio antenna or place at top of rolled up window.

- Use the dome light during darkness. It doesn't use much electricity and helps rescuers see you.
- For air, open a window slightly on the side away from the wind.
- Use whatever is available to insulate your body.
- If possible, run the engine and heater periodically for warmth.
- If in deep snow, ensure that exhaust pipe is clear when running engine.

If You Do Get Stuck Keep These Thoughts in Mind

- Heavy 4-wheel drive vehicles and larger tires get stuck too.
- Use the accelerator carefully. If you accelerate hard when stuck in snow, this often digs the tire deeper into the snow and melts the immediate area around the tire into water which then freezes into ice depending on the temperature.
- Clear the snow from around tires, under the vehicle if you can, and the path your tires need to travel to get out.
- Spread cat litter or sand in front of tires and along the path they will travel to get out.
- Use a low gear (automatic transmissions) or second gear (manual transmission). Slowly apply pressure to the accelerator. If the tires begin to spin, stop immediately.
- You can try rocking the vehicle forward and backward for short periods using reverse and/or forward gears. But, doing this continually might cause damage to your vehicle's transmission.
- If people are trying to help push the vehicle, make sure they are clear of the path of the drive tire(s). This will help prevent them being hit by thrown snow, ice, or other debris.
- Keep people out of the path where the vehicle could slide.
- Never spin tires at high speed if a tire is suspended above ground and allowed to rotate freely. Tires can explode from centrifugal force if not in contact with the ground.

Wolf River Chapter #5629
Shawano, WI