



Wolf River Chapter of Shawano, WI

#5629

DON'T BE LOST OUT IN THE COLD

There you were driving home at night in that nasty blizzard when some dipstick pulled out in front of you. You did what you could to avoid a collision and wound up sliding into deep snow in the ditch as the other driver sped away unaware of what just happened to you. After a few choice words and a "Hail Mary" for not getting killed, you attempted to get out of the ditch, but found you were stuck so deep, you couldn't open your door. On the radio revealed the highway you were on was being closed due to the severe weather. Most folks would have broken down and cried. But you were one of the smart drivers out there. You were prepared with your winter safety kit.

Naturally, (whether you like them or not) you had a cell phone (cheap ones will get the job done) so you could at least call home to let them know where you were and then called the authorities to let them know also. And the other items you packed kept you alive and reasonably comfortable in your temporary cold weather prison cell.

Beside the phone, you were smart and packed the items below in a tote or duffle bag and put it in the passenger compartment of your vehicle. You had bottled water, high calorie snack foods like trail mix with nuts, raisins and maybe even some M & Ms. You might have also put in some canned fruits (and you remembered the can opener!). The granola bars were also a good item. You packed a flashlight and extra batteries, a metal can (large soup can or small coffee can works well) with some slow melting candles and waterproof matches. You were able to use the can to pee in and dump it out the window. If you'd had to, you could have melted snow in the can for drinking, or burned one of your candles in it to provide a little more heat and light.

You carried a good quality sleeping bag. That was smart. Some are actually designed to keep you warm down to zero degrees or lower. And a bunch of those disposable hand, toe, and/or body warmers were another good investment.



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If you were able to get out of your vehicle, a shovel could have been used to clear snow away from your exhaust pipe so you didn't have to worry about carbon monoxide (you did make sure your exhaust system was in good shape, right!?)

Of course, you should also be carrying things like ice scrapers, a snow brush or broom, tire chains if you can, bag of kitty litter or sand to help with traction, a tow rope, shovel (they make nice collapsible ones), extra warm clothes, boots, and gloves or mittens.

There are also some things that are wise to have in your vehicle all year round. A good first-aid kit that includes burn ointment, sun block, splints, compact emergency blanket (looks like a big sheet of aluminum foil), rags or a roll of paper towels, a roll of toilet paper, jumper cables, a basic tool kit (including a roll of duct tape and electrician's tape), flares or flashing emergency light, and extra washer fluid. If you have an older vehicle, it is good to keep some extra oil, transmission fluid, anti-freeze, radiator stop leak, and a lubricant like WD-40.

Yes, the items mentioned above take up some space. But when it comes to your safety, what's a cubic foot or two, right? Like a good scout, we should always "Be Prepared". If you are, then you're ready when the only luck you can find is bad. Drive safe out there!

Mr. Safety
John Knickerbocker - 2014 Safety Officer