

Talks **ZONE**

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TZ5214

Road risks rise during winter

The dangers of operating a motor vehicle increase dramatically during the winter. The two main factors involved with staying safe are the condition of your vehicle and how you operate it.

Winter weather is hard on vehicles and their engines. Keeping them in good technical repair reduces the likelihood of an accident while driving.

Here are some ways to do that:

- Use four matched winter tires that carry the winter tire logo (also known as the alpine symbol — a snowflake and mountain) even when driving a 4X4. These tires provide better traction in snow, slush and icy conditions. Check for wear before installing previously-used tires and check tire air pressure frequently, as it decreases in cold weather.
- Get a maintenance check-up. Make sure the battery, brakes, lights and fuses, cooling and heating systems, electrical and exhaust systems, belts and hoses are in top shape.
- Install winter wiper blades. They are heavier, able to push snow and ice easier.
- Make sure the windshield washer reservoir is full and carry extra washer fluid in the vehicle.
- Check the window scraper and make sure its blade is still in good shape.
- Put a 50-pound (20 kilogram) bag of salt, sand or kitty litter in the trunk. It will provide added traction for rear-wheel drive cars and come in handy if you get stuck.
- Keep an emergency kit in your trunk. It should contain warm clothes, blankets, non-perishable high-energy foods, flashlight and fresh batteries, a candle and matches in a tin can, a first aid kit, a



spare pair of gloves, jumper cables and a snow shovel.

The safest strategy is to avoid driving in bad weather. If you must drive, check weather and travel conditions before heading out. Give yourself extra time for travel and, if weather is bad, wait for conditions to improve.

Before getting under way, clear snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors, hood and the roof.

On the road, always follow the two basic rules of winter driving: Reduce speed and increase following distance.

All movements behind the wheel should be controlled and deliberate, helping you maintain control and allowing other drivers to adjust to your actions.

The danger of skidding is greatest when you are taken by surprise. Since not all vehicles respond in the same way to icy, slippery roads, you should know how to handle yours in all types of weather.

Rear-wheel skid

- Take your foot off the brake pedal if hard braking causes the rear wheels to skid.
- Ease off the gas pedal if the rear wheels lose traction.
- Shift to neutral.

(automatic) or push in the clutch pedal (standard).

- Look down the road in the direction you want the vehicle to go. To regain control, steer gently in that direction.
- Once the vehicle is straight, return to a driving gear and accelerate gently.

Front-wheel skid

- Release the brake if the front wheels skid from hard braking.
- Ease off the gas pedal if the

front wheels lose traction.

- Shift to neutral (automatic) or push in the clutch (standard).
- Wait for the front wheels to grip the road again.
- Select drive (automatic) or release the clutch (standard).
- Accelerate gently.

Four-wheel skid

Sometimes all four wheels lose traction, generally at high speeds or under poor road conditions. To regain steering control:

- Remove your foot from the brake or accelerator.
- Shift into neutral.
- Look and steer in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go.
- Wait for the wheels to grip the road again.
- Return to a driving gear.

Proper braking is important for safe winter driving. If you don't have anti-lock brakes (ABS), the best way to stop on a slippery road is to brake, but not so hard that your tires stop turning. 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 right away, with slightly less force than before.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at their own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner.

The Quiz

These questions are meant to help you remember what was discussed today — not to test your patience or challenge your intelligence. The answers are at the bottom of the page. Cover them up, and complete the quiz as quickly as you can.

1. It is always safe to drive the posted speed limit during the winter.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
2. Should two winter tires and two all-season radial tires be used on the same vehicle?
YES ____ NO ____
3. Which of these are ways to keep your vehicle in good condition for winter driving:
 - A. Make sure battery, brakes, lights, cooling and heating systems, electrical and exhaust systems are all functioning properly.
 - B. Check tire pressure frequently.
 - C. Install winter wiper blades.
 - D. Carry extra windshield washer fluid in the vehicle.
 - E. All of the above.
4. One of the two basic rules for safe winter driving is to reduce the speed at which you follow other vehicles.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
5. On a snow-covered road, all movements behind the wheel should be:
 - A. Quick and firm.
 - B. Slow and steady.
 - C. Controlled and deliberate.
 - D. None of the above.
6. All vehicles respond the same way during a skid.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
7. Which of these are steps to regain control in a front-wheel skid:
 - A. Release the brake if hard braking causes the skid.
 - B. Ease off the gas pedal if the front wheels lose traction.
 - C. Put the transmission in neutral and wait for the front wheels to grip the road again.
 - D. When traction is regained, put the transmission in gear and accelerate gently.
 - E. All of the above.
8. Does your vehicle have an anti-lock braking system?
YES ____ NO ____ DON'T KNOW ____

ANSWERS: 1. False, 2. No, 3. E., 4. True, 5. C., 6. False, 7. E., 8. Your answer

Hold These Thoughts

What should you do if you get stuck or stranded in the snow?

- Don't panic!
- Avoid over-exertion and over-exposure to the cold. Cold weather can put extra stress on the heart and contribute to the hazards of over-exertion. Sweaty clothes next to the skin are not good insulators against the cold.
 - Stay in the vehicle if you cannot shovel it out of the snow.
 - Stay in the vehicle in blizzard conditions. Do not go for help unless it is very close and walking is safe. You can easily get disoriented in a blizzard.
 - Turn on flashing lights or set up flares. A brightly-colored cloth on the radio antenna could make your vehicle more visible in daylight.
 - Run the engine occasionally (about 10 minutes every hour) to provide heat and to conserve fuel. Ensure that the tail exhaust pipe is free of snow and keep the window opened slightly (on the side shielded from the wind) to prevent the build-up of carbon monoxide when the engine is running.
 - Bundle up in a blanket. If there is more than one person in the car, share. Two people sharing blankets will be warmer than either person alone in a blanket.
 - Wear a hat and scarf. The head and neck are major sources of heat loss from the body.
 - Monitor for any signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
 - Do not fall asleep. If there is more than one person in the car, take turns sleeping.
 - Do not stay in one position too long. Do some exercises to help the circulation; move arms and legs, clap your hands, etc.
 - Watch for traffic or emergency vehicles.

For the Record

Date of Meeting: _____

Topic: _____

Location: _____

Department: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Meeting Leader: _____

In Attendance:

Tips for Safety Meeting Leaders

Play it straight. Don't try to bamboozle your audience and don't preach to or teach to them. You might have the safety title but your audience has got the experience. Ask a few pointed questions rather than just go through safety procedures. Getting a response from your audience means a successful meeting. Try throwing in a statement so wrong just to see if any one is awake and will challenge it.

Don't let anything interrupt the meeting. Before you start, make arrangements for someone to answer your phone and take messages. Check to make sure other activities aren't scheduled for the

same time, or that people don't have to leave early. Ask your audience to turn off their cell phones or other communication devices.

Get close to 'near misses. Encourage employees to recall situations when they came close to having an accident. Try to get the group to learn from these experiences. When discussing near misses or actual incidents, be sure not to criticize anyone by name in front of the group.

Talk is cheap, and valuable. Remember, accidents are costly in more ways than one. Invest a little talk and time in safety programs

Note: TalksZone safety meetings are not intended to take the place of your own safety procedures. Always consult and/or review your procedures before attempting any work.