

Winter Driving Tips

❄️ OVERVIEW ❄️

**Double travel time.
Double braking time.
Double space in traffic.
Assume road is slippery.**

Preparation:

- * Back car into the driveway or parking space; this allows access to the battery in case a boost is needed.
- * Wipe all the snow off the car, including all windows and lights; remember, keep a scraper handy.
- * Keep windows and lights clean; store extra washer fluid and paper towels in the trunk.
- * Wear polarized sun-glasses on bright days after a fresh snowfall.
- * Keep a shovel and a bag of dry sand, kitty litter or traction aids in the trunk.
- * Turn off all electrical accessories before starting the car.
- * Maintain vehicle: get a tuneup, check antifreeze strength, tires and brakes.
- * Test battery: at 0 degrees fahrenheit it loses 35% strength.
- * Follow manufacturers' recommendations for engine oil (usually lighter grade for cold weather).
- * Keep gas tank topped up.

Hazards:

- * Loss of traction
- * Poor visibility
- * Icy spots - bridges, elevated roadways, underpasses and shaded areas
- * New/inexperienced drivers
- * Snow banks hiding driveways and children playing
- * Pedestrians

Driving Techniques:

- * Loss of traction affects steering, braking and acceleration.
- * Use eyes effectively - look at least one and a half city blocks ahead to spot problems and take preventative action immediately; check mirrors frequently.
- * Accelerate gradually, easing off the gas if wheels start to spin.
- * Modulate brake to prevent wheels from locking, and with a standard transmission down-shift well in advance.
- * In extremely slippery situations, shift to neutral in an automatic transmission to help slow the car.



- * Front wheels must be turning to steer effectively; therefore, always brake first, then steer with your foot off the brake. Apply brakes while travelling in a straight line, start to turn and apply gas gradually.
- * Going up hill shift to D1 or D2 well in advance to prevent an unexpected shift.
- * Going down hill shift to a lower gear well in advance. If braking is required, use neutral if road is very icy (this equalizes traction among all wheels).
- * Control wheel slips by easing off gas; then re-apply gently, gradually increasing as vehicle regains momentum.
- * Keep at least two wheels on sanded areas or bare pavement to assist in steering and braking control.
- * Monitor weather conditions; ice is more slippery near the melting point.

Skids:

The best way to handle skids is to avoid them. Skids are caused by excessive speed, excessive braking and over-steering.

What to do if a skid occurs:

- * Remain calm.
- * Focus eyes up and ahead to help detect the start of a skid.
- * Monitor braking and cornering forces.
- * React immediately by releasing gas and/or depress clutch.
- * In a rear wheel skid, keep eyes up and steer in the intended direction; then follow through with a slight adjustment left or right.

This information was provided by CAA Mid-Western Ontario.

Winter Travel Kit

Preparation can make it easier for drivers to cope with unexpected problems. The following may be useful to carry in your car. These are not necessities, but they can help reduce the inconvenience of some common motoring problems.

Glove Compartment

- * name, address and phone number of person who should be notified in an emergency
- * waterproof flashlight with alkaline batteries
- * pocket knife
- * tire pressure gauge
- * pad of notepaper and pen
- * road maps
- * matches

Trunk

- * cloth or leather work gloves
- * extra clothing and footwear
- * wool blanket
- * emergency food pack
- * candle in deep can
- * first-aid kit
- * battery jumper cables
- * clean rags or paper towels
- * vinyl electrical tape
- * flares
- * warning triangles
- * tire pump
- * sand paper or battery terminal tool
- * can of engine oil
- * fire extinguisher
- * small shovel
- * snow brush
- * ice scraper
- * bag of sand or kitty litter
- * traction mats
- * tire chains
- * assortment of commonly used hand tools
- * axe or hatchet
- * jack and lug wrench
- * methyl hydrate for fuel line and windshield de-icing

Note: Items carried in the trunk should be secured in a large box. Loose items could damage the vehicle fenders and trunk lid. Special care is needed in station wagons and hatchbacks to secure objects carried in the open cargo area so they do not endanger passengers in an accident.