

Wednesday, December 11, 1991

# People should prepare for winter ahead

Last winter's headlines are tragic reminders of Canada's unforgiving winters:

- An 18-year-old man's frozen body was found in a ditch - December 21, 1990
- A 39-year-old man froze to death - December 21, 1990
- A 28-year-old woman died of exposure - December 26, 1990

In each of these incidents, the victims' cars got stuck in a ditch, and when they tried to go for help, they were overcome by extreme cold. The temperature was approximately minus 34C.

And you don't need to walk very far - one of the victims was found only 1.6 km from his car.

Winter travel by automobile can be serious business - so don't make the mistake of thinking it can't happen to you! Be prepared. You might consider membership in the Canadian Automobile Association. If you do a lot of winter driving in isolated regions, you might also consider having a Citizen's Band radio.

Emergency Preparedness Canada, the federal department responsible for advancing civil preparedness for emergencies of all types, has some good advice on how you and your car can be prepared for winter storms, which are among the more than 60 types of emergencies that can and do happen here.

**Heed the warnings**  
Local weather offices of the federal Atmospheric Environment Service issue warnings of winter weather conditions for blizzards, heavy snow, freezing rain or drizzle, cold waves and winds.

**Know the hazards**  
• Blizzards - a combination of falling, blowing, drifting snow, high winds, low visibility, cold temperatures (less than - 10 degrees C); duration - six hours or more.

• Heavy snow. 15 cm or more in 12 hours.

• Freezing rain. An ice storm coating roads, trees, overhead wires, etc. with ice.

• Winds. The cause of blizzard conditions, drifting, reduced visibility and windchill effects. Weather offices issue warnings when a wind chill (rate of cooling) of 2,000 watts per square metre is expected. This is cold enough to freeze a person's face in less than a minute.

(Equivalent to -40 degrees C.)

**Pre-winter checklist**

Ignition system, battery, lights, cooling system, fuel system, lubrication, exhaust system, heater, brakes, wipers.

defroster, snow tires, chains, antifreeze and winter oil.

**Winter travel kit checklist**  
For country driving put a winter storm kit in the trunk of your car. Even for city driving you should have some of these items with you:

Shovel, sand (or kitty litter, which is lighter than sand or salt and doesn't freeze), tow chain, ice scraper and brush, road maps, first-aid kit, matches in a waterproof container, flashlight, warning light or road flares, extra winter clothing and footwear, emergency food pack, booster cables, compass, sleeping bags, reflector or hand-held mirror for signalling, screwdriver, knife, candle in deep can (to warm hands, heat a drink or to use as an emergency light), methyl hydrate (for fuel line and windshield de-icing), axe or hatchet, fire extinguisher, pliers, whistle, blankets or rugs - space blankets take up little room.

**When you travel**

- Drive with caution. Measure your speed to conditions. Be defensive.
- Don't, press on. If the going gets tough, turn back or seek refuge.
- Try to keep to main roads.
- Make sure you have ample gasoline.
- Don't be foolhardy.
- Keep your radio tuned to a local station for weather advice.

**If you get trapped**

Don't panic.  
Avoid over-exertion and exposure. Shovelling and bitter cold can kill. Stay in your car. You won't get lost and you'll have a shelter. Keep fresh air in your car. Open a window on the side sheltered from the wind. Run your motor sparingly. Beware of exhaust fumes; ensure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow. (REMEMBER - YOU CAN'T SMELL CARBON MONOXIDE FUMES!) Set out warning lights or flares. Put on the dome light. Overuse of headlights may run down your battery. Exercise your limbs, hands and feet vigorously. Keep moving and don't fall asleep. Keep watch for traffic or searchers.



**Awards ceremony**

Jim Blain, National Chief Executive of Scouts Canada recently presented Ron Birrell, Troop Scouter of 3rd Acton with an appreciation award for spearheading the Food Drive both in Acton and Georgetown. Taken at the Love and Christ Food Bank. (Pictured above, left to right) Joan Waidle, Acton Food Bank; Anne Rodd, Love and Christ Food Bank; Mr. Birrell; Mr. Blain; Dennis White, President North-Halton District Council Scouts Canada; Elaine Hannah, North-Halton District Commissioner Scouts Canada. (Photo submitted)



**Spider Web Craft**

D.C. Elaine Hannah (left) gives instructions to Part One Wood Badge training course held at the Terra Cotta Jack Smythe Outdoor Education centre. (Photo submitted)



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