

# November

# Wheels

## Watch out for black and shiny asphalt – this may be black ice

As weather conditions change, so do road conditions. During winter, you may find yourself stuck on a patch of ice or snow. Racing the engine won't help – you need traction to get out.

- To get out of a rut, shovel away the snow (you should always keep a shovel in your trunk during winter), break up the ice, then try to gently drive away.

- For better traction, you can also use traction pads under the tires, or spread salt, sand or kitty litter (these should also be in your winter survival kit) around the tires.

Always use gentle pressure on the accelerator.

- When the roads are icy, drive extra carefully.

Reduce your speed. Keep more

### Add extra items to emergency kit for winter driving

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amount.

In most parts of Canada, a 50/50 mix of coolant and water keeps the coolant from freezing, lubricates the water pump and protects the cooling system from corrosion. In very cold areas, it may be necessary to increase the concentration of coolant – but never more than 70 per cent coolant to 30 per cent water.

But if you're like most Canadians, you're more concerned about heating than cooling at this time of year. The only heat you get is from the engine, which is why your heater blows cold when you first start off (before the engine warms up). If your coolant is low, your heater is the first thing to suffer, so keep your antifreeze topped up.

You may also hear a squealing noise (audible over your own teeth chattering) from the heater fan. That could indicate a worn bearing in the fan motor, which will probably seize up on you when you need it most.

If there's a lot of moisture on your windshield, and the defroster can't remove it, you could have a faulty heater core. That's a mini-radiator that transfers engine heat into your passenger compartment. Don't delay, get it fixed – you need to be able to see where you're going and defrosters have enough trouble keeping windows clear in very cold weather.

If you travel or commute, it's worth taking a little extra time to make sure you have an emergency kit in the trunk. Winter additions to the usual emergency kit include the following:

- ✓ good scraper and snow brush
- ✓ matches and candles
- ✓ can opener
- ✓ traction mats
- ✓ red cloth (help signal)
- ✓ blanket, hats and mittens
- ✓ canned fruit/nuts/survival rations
- ✓ tin cup
- ✓ small shovel
- ✓ jumper cables

distance than usual between you and the vehicle in front. Avoid sudden steering, accelerating or braking movements.

- If you find yourself skidding, don't panic.

For rear-wheel skids, shift to neutral or de-clutch. Do not brake. If the rear of the vehicle swings right, steer right and vice versa.

- For front-wheel skids (which usually occur in front-wheel-drive vehicles), shift to

neutral or de-clutch, steer smoothly into the turn and do not brake.

- For fishtail skids (where the car swings back and forth) shift to neutral or de-clutch, steer in the direction you want to go and do not brake.

- When skids go too far, the car may start

to spin like a top.

Hit the brake hard, locking all four

wheels. The vehicle may keep spinning, but it will spin along a straight path in the direction the vehicle is travelling.

- Pay special attention to shaded areas of the road, bridges and overpasses. These sections freeze first and stay frozen long after the sun has come out.

- Watch out for black ice, where the road ahead looks like black and shiny asphalt (in winter, asphalt is a grey-white colour). Slow down and be ready to shift to neutral or de-clutch.

**For front-wheel skids, shift to neutral or de-clutch, steer smoothly into the turn and do not brake.**

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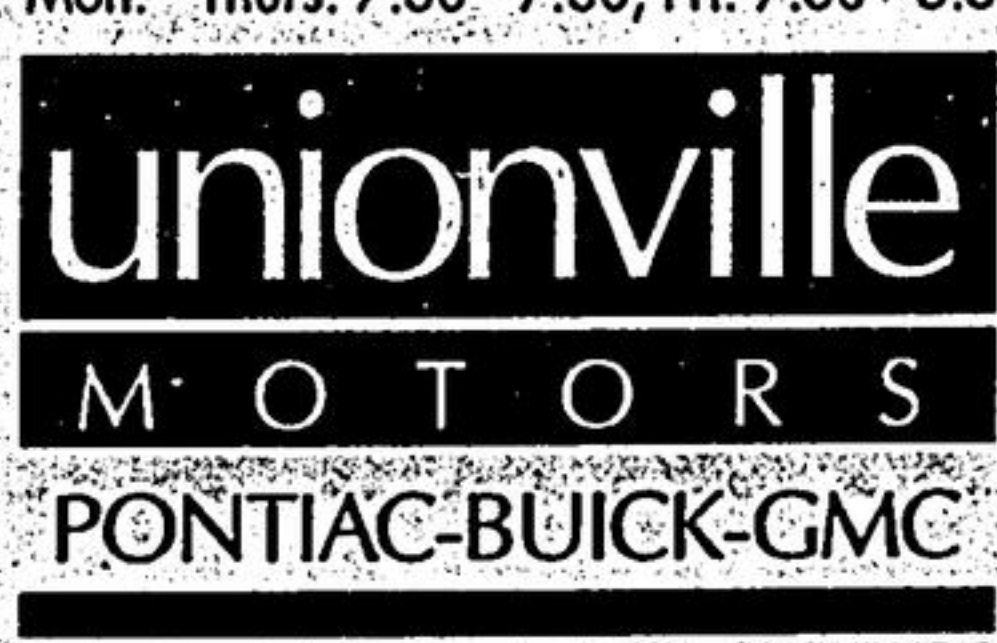
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