

# Motorists urged to be prepared for winter weather

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Motorists should get themselves and their vehicles ready for winter driving before the bad weather hits, CAA and Toronto police urge.

"The weather is set to turn, and we want to get drivers thinking about how to be best prepared and to stay safe in these conditions," CAA spokesperson Jeff LeMoine said. "Changing your mindset so that you're more patient, leaving yourself more time and space on the road, all of those things will help to keep us all safe."

Police and CAA held a media event in Etobicoke Wednesday morning where officers used a special "skid car" to demonstrate techniques to get out of a skid.

"The easiest way to describe it is you steer where you want to go," Const. Clint Stibbe said. "The reality is in some cases when you do that, you overcorrect and then the vehicle begins to swing back the

other way. You now have to compensate for that correction and you have to do it immediately. If you have to sit there and think about it, you're not prepared ... (and) you'll be out of control and involved in a collision."

Snow could hit Toronto on Sunday, and police see a spike in collisions whenever there's a sudden change in weather conditions.

Stibbe said motorist behaviour should also change by slower driving and no sudden braking.

"We depend so much on our safety system in the cars. In some cases we're putting so much faith in them that we're overdriving the road conditions and the safety systems and essentially putting ourselves out of control."

LeMoine said vehicles should also be made ready for the winter.

"You want to make sure your lighting system is fully working," he said. "Your windshield wipers should be functioning well because if you can't see through your windshield it's unsafe,

## CAA offers these additional tips for winter driving:

- Stay on main roads
- Keep a phone charger in your car
- Avoid using overdrive or cruise control
- Slow down and move over for emergency vehicles
- Never pass a snow plow on the right-hand side
- Practice emergency braking to understand how your vehicle will react
- Ensure your gas tank is always above half full

and make sure your washer fluid is topped up, that your oil is in good standing."

LeMoine also suggests having a survival kit and an emergency roadside kit in vehicles.

The kits should include a snow brush, an ice scraper, a shovel, a first aid kit, extra clothing, a flashlight, extra windshield washer fluid along with food like granola bars and bottled water.



Andrew Palamarchuk/Metroland

CAA communications consultant Jeff LeMoine displays items that make up a vehicle winter emergency kit for safe driving during the season.

Having Kitty Litter is also a good idea.

"If your vehicle becomes stuck in a situation where the tires can't grip the surface of the road, sprinkling some Kitty Litter near the

tires can sometimes help you gain just enough traction to get out of that situation," said LeMoine.

CAA also recommends having a set of four matching winter tires installed for

better traction. "They do make a large difference over all-season tires, and they can help reduce your stopping distance by up to 25 per cent," LeMoine said.



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