



# SAFETY TIPS

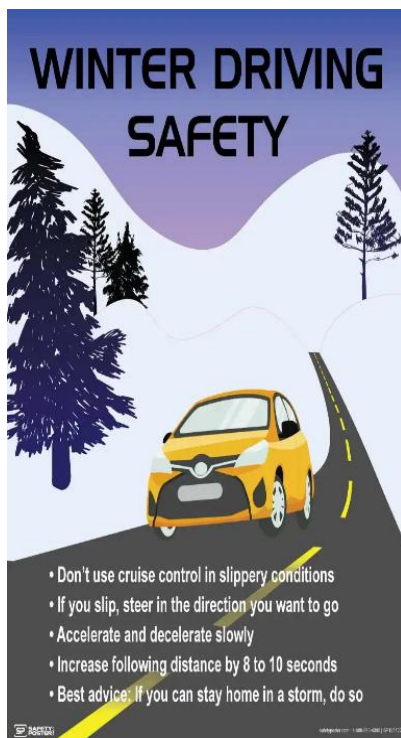
## 2024 WINTER DRIVING

Safe winter driving depends on operators maintaining optimum visibility, vehicle control, speed, following distance, and identifying risks. If you choose to drive in less than desirable conditions, you must understand the involved risks. Based on statistics, most people do not take winter driving seriously or are unfamiliar with the task. By adhering to these Safety Tips, you can mitigate the seasonal hazards associated with winter driving.



**VEHICLE INSPECTION:** Ensure your vehicle is maintained in optimal condition. Have your vehicle inspected for road worthiness. Inspect all tires (including the spare) for tread wear and proper air pressure. Verify blinkers, flashers, and all brake lights work. Keep windshield clean and washer fluid reservoir full. Check that front and rear wipers are in good working order and defrosters work. Keep headlights, break lights, turn signals, sensors and cameras clear of snow and ice. Have the battery inspected for proper voltage.

**PREPARATION / TRAVEL:** Get a good night sleep prior to long distance travel. Eliminate radio distractions by using a music play list. Turn on and set navigation before moving your vehicle. Let the engine warm up before driving to enable defrosters to work. Use headlights to enhance your visibility to others. If driving long distances, monitor weather conditions along the route and adjust travel plan as needed. Slow down and increase vehicle following distance when crossing bridges and overpasses that may have frozen over. Fill up when gas tank is half full. Inform someone of your destination, route, and estimated departure/arrival times. Send texts or updates only when vehicle is safety parked. Complete a “TRiPS” Risk Assessment before any long-distance vehicle travel. Have your supervisor review the assessment with you to mitigate any known risks.



**SAFE WINTER DRIVING:** If possible, avoid driving in snow, sleet, or icy conditions. If driving is required, know the risks, and adhere to the following:

- Buckle up! Ensure all passengers remain buckled for entirety of trip.
- Slow down to appropriate speeds and move over when emergency vehicles/crews are tending to other vehicles on roadway shoulder.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly to avoid spinning tires.
- Drive during daylight hours as much as possible. Avoid driving during normal sleeping hours.
- Anticipate motorist's actions; watch for bikers, pedestrians, and animals.
- Communicate your intentions well in advance when turning or changing lanes, and always leave yourself an escape route.
- If driving rental vehicle, familiarize yourself with controls and handling characteristics before driving. Test brakes for sensitivity.
- Do not follow snowplows too closely. Large size salt pellets and sand can damage your vehicle.
- Take rest breaks often; alternate drivers, if available.
- Self-assess fatigue level periodically and take corrective actions when feeling tired or fatigued.
- Stay focused! Avoid engaging in distractions that deter from safe vehicle operations.

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**EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:** One of the most hazardous elements of winter driving involves icy road conditions, particularly black ice – which is nearly impossible to detect until it's too late. If your vehicle becomes out of control on an icy road, avoid the instinct to slam on the brakes. Instead, stay calm and ease off the pedals. Continue to look and steer in the direction you want to go until able to regain control of the vehicle. Prepare for emergencies by maintaining a **vehicle emergency kit** in your trunk. Include a shovel, sand, first aid kit, flashlight w/batteries, ice scraper, tools, medicines, jumper cables, broom, water, non-perishable food, blankets, gloves, hat, and warm clothes.



Vehicle Emergency Kit



**DID YOU KNOW?** Per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- Over 70% of US roads are in snowy regions;
- About 70% of the US population lives in snowy regions;
- Approximately one-quarter of all crashes occur during winter conditions;
- Over 1,300 people die annually due to snowy and icy pavement;
- The U.S. averages over 156,000 crashes annually due to icy road conditions.

**Slow Down, Stay Alert, and Increase Following Distance**

**WINTER DRIVING MISHAPS:** Over the last few years, several mishaps have occurred involving Marines while driving in wintery conditions. These mishaps include:

- LCpl, passenger in a car that hit a patch of ice and lost control, striking a parked car.
- LCpl, driving and merging on Interstate when vehicle slid out from under him and collided with a jersey barrier. Speed and wet road conditions contributed to mishap.
- PFC, as a passenger was involved in a rollover crash. Driver lost control and hydroplaned into ditch.
- LCpl, while driving hit ice patch and flipped pick-up truck. Seat belt was not worn, and LCpl was ejected through the windshield. LCpl suffered severe injuries.
- GySgt, driving, lost control of vehicle during snowstorm and crashed, suffered a concussion.
- Four Marines were unbuckled passengers in a vehicle, driven by a PFC. The vehicle slid off an icy driveway, went down a hill and rolled onto its roof. One Marine was paralyzed from injuries.

**AVOID RISKY DRIVING BEHAVIORS:** You know the rules: Do not text or drive distracted, obey posted speed control signs, wear seatbelts, and always drive sober. Know that alcohol – and even some over the counter medicines – can impair safe and responsible driving by affecting your coordination, judgment, perception, and reaction times. Adopt the mindset to drive safely; it's a decision you can live with.

**WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY:** If you are stopped or stalled in winter weather, remain calm and stay focused. Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself. Let your car be seen. Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light on. Be mindful of carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of snow and run your car only sporadically, just long enough to stay warm. Don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.



**SAFE DRIVING RESOURCES:** <https://trips.safety.army.mil/TRiPS> - <https://highways.dot.gov/> - <https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips>

**Manage the Risk**



**Protect the Force**