



WINTER HAZARD AWARENESS WEEK

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DRIVING AND TRAVEL SAFETY CHECKLIST

PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE FOR WINTER:

Winterize your vehicle to avoid breakdowns. Have a certified mechanic check the following:

- Battery
- Wipers and washer fluid
- Antifreeze
- Ignition system
- Thermostat Lights
- Exhaust system
- Flashing hazard lights
- Heater/Defroster
- Brakes
- Oil level
- Tires and air pressure (consider snow tires)

BEFORE YOU DRIVE:

- Check current road conditions. Go to www.Mn511.org for the latest information.
- Set the car radio to stations that regularly broadcast weather warnings, traffic reports and instructions.
- Tell someone where you are going, the routes you plan to travel, and when you expect to return. Report your arrival.
- Stay on designated roads. Avoid short cuts off main highways, as they may not be plowed or patrolled.
- Before leaving town, fill your gas tank. While traveling, stop frequently to refill your tank.
- Assemble an emergency kit and keep it in the vehicle throughout the season.
- Keep essential items in the car. Include:
 - Bottled water and snacks
 - Boots, coat, gloves
 - Blankets
 - Flashlight and batteries
 - Maps (even if you have GPS)
 - Cell phone with charger
 - Shovel
 - Windshield scraper
 - Tow rope
 - Booster cables
 - Reflector or bright cloth to use as a distress signal
 - Salt/sand/cat litter for tire traction





ON THE ROAD:

- Always buckle your seat belt!
- If driving on snow or ice, brake slowly and gently. Brake early when approaching an intersection.
- If you start to slide, ease off the gas pedal or brakes. Steer into the direction of the skid until you regain traction. Then straighten your vehicle. If you have antilock brakes, apply steady pressure.
- In fog, drive with headlights set on dim or use fog lights.
- Stay within the limits of your vision. If it is too difficult to see, pull off the road and stop. Turn on hazards.
- Decrease speed and increase following distance on hazardous roads. Your speed should adjust for conditions without impeding traffic flow.
- Watch for slick spots, especially on bridges and overpasses. Be prepared to react.
- Never try to pass in blowing snow, as there may be vehicles ahead you cannot see.
- Be alert for snowplows. When a plow is coming toward you, allow room for it to pass. Its blade may cross the centerline. Allow extra distance between your vehicle and service vehicles.
- NEVER drive into a snow cloud. A snowplow may be ahead clearing the lane or preparing to turn around.
- Be careful after any minor crash. If you are bumped from behind and do not feel comfortable exiting your vehicle, motion to the other driver and drive to the nearest safe place to stop, such as a 24-hour store.
- Be prepared to turn back and seek shelter if conditions become threatening.

WINTER TRAVEL SURVIVAL TIPS

- Check road and weather conditions.
- Keep gas tank half full.
- Share travel plans.
- Stranded? Stay in the vehicle!



IF YOU BECOME STRANDED:

- If you break down, pull off the road. Turn on hazards.
- Stay in the car. You could become disoriented and lost in a snowstorm.
- If you have a cell phone, call 911 for help. Do not turn off your cell phone.
- Display a trouble sign or attach a bright cloth to your car's antenna or door.
- Run the engine occasionally to keep warm. Run the heater during this time. Recharge your cell phone.
- Beware of carbon monoxide. Clear snow from the exhaust pipe and open a window for ventilation.
- If it is dark, turn on your vehicle's interior light to make it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Avoid overexertion. Shoveling or pushing a car can cause a heart attack or make medical conditions worse.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia or frostbite.
- Use your emergency kit as necessary. Stay hydrated.