



TECHNICAL UPDATE

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WINTER WEATHER DRIVING

Being prepared for winter weather driving is crucial for ensuring safety on the road. Winter conditions can be challenging and unpredictable, and they often present unique hazards that require drivers to take extra precautions. Here are some key reasons why being prepared for winter weather driving is important:

- **Reduced Visibility:** Winter weather, including snow and freezing rain, can significantly reduce visibility on the road. Proper preparation, such as ensuring your vehicle's lights are working correctly and keeping windows clear, can help improve visibility and reduce the risk of accidents.
- **Icy Roads:** Cold temperatures can cause moisture on the road to freeze, leading to icy conditions. Ice makes roads slippery and increases the likelihood of losing control of the vehicle. Being prepared includes having the right tires for winter conditions and driving at appropriate speeds.
- **Snow Accumulation:** Snow accumulation on roads can create challenges for drivers. It's important to have the necessary equipment, such as snow chains or winter tires, to navigate through snowy conditions. Clearing snow and ice from your vehicle before driving is also crucial for safety.
- **Vehicle Maintenance:** Cold temperatures can affect your vehicle's performance. Regular maintenance checks, including ensuring the battery, brakes, and heating system are in good condition, are essential for winter driving. A well-maintained vehicle is less likely to break down in harsh conditions.
- **Emergency Situations:** Winter weather can lead to unexpected emergencies such as getting stuck in snow, accidents, or road closures. Being prepared with an emergency kit can be crucial in case you find yourself in a challenging situation. See below for what to keep in an emergency kit.
- **Longer Travel Times:** Winter conditions can slow down traffic and increase travel times. Planning ahead and allowing for extra time to reach your destination can help reduce stress and prevent rushing, which can lead to unsafe driving practices.
- **Awareness of Road Conditions:** Before embarking on a winter journey, it's essential to check weather forecasts and road conditions. Stay informed about any advisories or warnings, and consider delaying your trip if conditions are particularly hazardous.
- **Legal Requirements:** In Colorado, there are requirements for winter driving, such as the use of snow chains or winter tires during certain months. Being aware of and adhering to these requirements is not only important for safety but also to avoid potential legal consequences.

The Colorado Department of Transportation recommends people traveling in cold weather stock their vehicles with a winter weather survival kit that includes the following:

- Flares/reflectors/whistle to signal for help and warn other motorists
- Sturdy scraper/snow brush/snow shovel to clear snow
- Battery- or crank-powered radio to listen to emergency broadcasts
- Flashlight with extra batteries or crank-powered flashlight
- Survival blanket or sleeping bag
- Chemical hand warmers
- Extra set of clothes, including coat, hat, mittens, boots, etc.
- Gallon jug of water and nonperishable food
- First aid kit and essential medications
- Tire chains and tow strap
- Non-clumping kitty litter/sand for traction
- Jumper cables

IF YOU ARE STRANDED IN YOUR VEHICLE

If you find yourself stranded in your vehicle during a snowstorm, immediately check that the tailpipe is clear of snow. A blocked tailpipe can lead to a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide in the passenger compartment. You should also stay in your car with your seatbelt on unless you see a building nearby. Turn the car off to conserve gas, and only turn it back on occasionally to stay warm. The more hydrated you are, the warmer you will stay so melt snow, if necessary.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

Being prepared for winter weather driving involves a combination of proactive measures, such as proper vehicle maintenance, using the right equipment, and staying informed about weather and road conditions. Taking these precautions can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and ensure a safer driving experience during the winter months. Keep an emergency winter survival kit in your vehicle and know the steps to take if stranded. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861-0507.