

## Winter Driving – Part 1

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Driving safely during the months that include snow, blinding storms, ice and slush takes preparation and the proper mind-set. What considerations do drivers need to make during the coldest of seasons? Well, there are several areas that really need your attention. In part one we'll discuss preparing your car and getting equipped for handling emergencies.

Preparing Your Car - Cold weather makes it necessary to make sure that your vehicle is ready to stand up to its rigors. A stalled car may be an irritating inconvenience in warm or moderate weather. However, the same circumstance could literally endanger a driver's life when it occurs in a winter storm or during extremely low temperatures. Your goal should be to minimize the chances of a vehicle breakdown by having a qualified mechanic inspect the following:

- Wipers
- Tires (tread wear, alignment, and traction by maintaining air pressure)
- Brakes
- Radiator and coolant system
- Transmission
- All fluid levels
- Hoses, clamps and belts

It is important that once checked (and any deficiencies corrected), a car owner be sure to periodically certify that these items remain in good order. This is especially crucial prior to long trips.

Preparing For Emergencies - Wintertime calls for drivers to be ready to handle weather conditions and the likelihood of being stranded. The following items are important for dealing with routine and emergency winter driving situations:

ice scraper	first aid kit	snow brush and small shovel	heavy blankets
flares	flashlight	matches	Non-perishable food
small or basic tool kit	bag of cat litter or sand	candles	salt
extra clothing (coat, boots, gloves)	jumper cables and drive belts	car phone, cell phone or citizen's band radio	extra quart or two of motor oil
extra gallon of antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid	metal cup or small container (in order to melt snow for drinking water)	a dry support for a car jack such as small, sturdy wooden board	

It is also helpful to keep plenty of fuel in your car or truck's gas tank to avoid running out during weather related snags in traffic or if you must pull off the road. Be sure to read Winter Driving - Part 2.

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