

Winter Driving – Part 2

In this part, let's talk about making long trips, skidding, actions to take when you're stranded and driving in the right frame of mind.

Preparation For Long Trips - Long distance trips by car or truck can be dangerous during the winter, so here are some suggestions for minimizing the chance of the trip becoming a tragedy:

- find out about expected weather conditions at locations along your route
- tune into local stations for information on road conditions
- give persons on either end of your trip a travel itinerary including planned departure and arrival times and call these persons to let them know of your safe arrival
- stop frequently for resting and re-fueling
- travel as much as possible in daylight
- be familiar with your route, carry recent maps and prepare alternate routes
- be prepared for travel delays and be willing to pull over on the road or to stop at road shelters to wait out poor driving conditions

What To Do If You're Stranded

- pull your car over as far off the road as possible to avoid being hit
- put on any additional clothing to keep warm
- use phone or radio to call for help
- it is better to stay with the car and run the engine periodically, not continuously
- conserve your energy; over-exertion by trying to move your vehicle or shoveling too long endangers your health
- melt snow for drinking water
- move your arms and legs to improve your circulation and to keep warmer
- before leaving your vehicle, consider the outside temperature. A person can freeze very quickly, especially if there is much wind
- If you are stranded in an area where there is regular traffic, put on your flashers or raise your car's hood to attract help

What to do if you start to skid - Above all, try not to panic. Abrupt or wild steering or braking will make things more dangerous. Skids occur when the car's speed overcomes tire traction. If you do not have anti-lock brakes, gently pump your brakes until the car slows and traction (ability to steer) is regained. If you DO have anti-lock brakes, apply steady pressure until control is regained. If you are able, try to steer your car in the same direction in which you're skidding. In other words, if you're skidding to the right, turn your STEERING WHEEL (not your tires) to the right. This action should counteract the skidding.

Drive With A Winter Frame Of Mind - Winter driving often becomes frustrating due to having warm weather driving habits, expectations and behaviors. Cold weather driving becomes easier when you're realistic. Winter travel takes more patience, care and planning. A 30 minute drive during clear, sunny and dry conditions is no longer possible under snowy, slick or icy conditions. Minimize your frustration and increase your chances for safe travel by doing the following:

- allow more distance between you and the car ahead of you as safe braking distances are MUCH longer on slick roads

- slow down
- watch for icy conditions, especially on bridges and overpasses
- keep your headlights on so that your car is more visible to other drivers
- don't start driving until your windows are clear of frost, snow, etc.
- clear snow and ice from your vehicle's lights
- leave for destinations earlier, expecting that travel will take significantly longer
- drive with a higher level of awareness of traffic and road conditions
- clear snow from the top of your car so that it doesn't later obscure the view of other drivers
- use caution when approaching intersections
- avoid sudden braking, turning, accelerating and lane changes
- make it a habit to wash your car, including the underside, regularly to remove harsh chemicals and salts which are corrosive

Winter often does provide a beautiful backdrop in which to drive, but it helps if you're patient, cautious, realistic and prepared. Be sure to read [Winter Driving - Part 1](#).

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