



Double-check weather forecasts and traffic reports during winter weather storms. These guidelines can help you get prepared prior to your travels.

Winter Vehicle Maintenance

- Before the weather turns bad, make sure your vehicle is properly serviced and maintained. Ensure the electrical systems, brakes, batteries, lights, windshield wipers, antifreeze and heating and cooling systems are in good shape.
- Check your tires - they are very important. Keep tires properly inflated and make sure they have adequate tread. Plan ahead - tire dealers are busiest before and during winter storms.
- Use the Take Winter By Storm Checklist to prepare a vehicle emergency kit, including a radio, flashlight, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, emergency contact information, water, and non-perishable food. You can find a detailed list at TakeWinterByStorm.org.
- Double-check your vehicle for winter weather travel gear like extra warm clothing, a blanket, a small shovel, sand or non-clumping litter, emergency flares, deice materials, tire chains, and an ice scraper.
- As the temperature drops, keep your gas tank at least half full; the extra gas helps reduce condensation that can plug your fuel line with ice and stall your engine in cooler weather.
- Make sure your vehicle is completely up to date on regular scheduled maintenance to avoid costly repairs, reduce CO2 emissions, and maintain optimum fuel economy.
- Carry tire chains and double check they are a proper fit for your vehicle's tires.

Additional Items To Include In Your Vehicle*

- Portable Water
 - Four, 16oz bottles per person per day (change out frequently)
- Non-perishable Food
 - Easy-open snack bars, trail mix, crackers
- First aid kit, including personal medications
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Emergency Contact Card
 - Place with vehicle insurance information
- Winter clothing for each traveler
 - Carry coats, boots, hats, gloves/mittens and/or scarves for each traveler – anything that would keep them warm if they need to evacuate the vehicle
- Whistle to signal for help
- Hand warmers
- Blankets for each traveler
- Rain gear
- Emergency flares and bright roadside traffic signal (cone, triangle)
- Safety beacon/flashing light
- Tool kit
 - Include adjustable wrench, screw driver with adjustable bits (flat, square, Phillips), hammer, tow rope, duck tape
- Deicer for vehicles
- Ice scraper/brush
- Jumper cables
- Small shovel and traction aids (sand, non-clumping litter, chains)
- Paper, pen and local maps (with pre-determined travel routes)
 - If you must leave your vehicle, be sure to leave a note telling others your travel plans
- Cell phone charger and/or extra battery
- Antiseptic towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

*For a list to build a more detailed personal preparedness kit for your vehicle, go to TakeWinterByStorm.org.



Winter Driving and Travel. Driving in perfect weather can be hard enough. But when severe weather hits, it's important to take extra precautions.

- If bad weather is predicted, check the forecast before heading out and adjust your travel plans if you can. If bad weather is forecast, consider postponing your trip.
- Watch out for standing water, which can cause hydroplaning, and remember bridges and overpasses freeze first, so approach them cautiously and avoid sudden changes in direction.
- Don't use high beams. Visibility is usually compromised in winter weather conditions. Day or night, headlights should be on and set to low beam.
- Turn on wipers. Obvious, right? But make sure your wipers are replaced every six to twelve months for optimal performance.
- Do not drive through deep standing water or around road closure signs - the water may be deeper than you think. Driving through standing water is the leading cause of flood-related death. Flooding can also conceal dangerous road damage or downed electrical lines. Obey closure signs until the water has receded and the road has safely reopened. Turn around. Don't drown!
- If a flash flood causes water to rise around your car, abandon the vehicle and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away. Be especially vigilant when traveling at night!
- When there's snow on the ground, do not travel unless you have to. Staying home will keep you and others safe. If you must travel, check for local road closures and try to map the safest and least accident prone route.
- When traveling, be aware of ice hazards, especially on shaded roadways, bridges or in high elevation areas prone to freezing.
- If you have to travel, stay on the main roads and travel prepared with extra warm clothes, a blanket, a small shovel, sand or non-clumping litter, emergency flares, deice materials, tire chains, and an ice scraper.
- Before you head out, maximize visibility by making sure your windows and mirrors are defrosted - keep the AC on to keep them from fogging up while you're driving.
- During high winds, look out. Keep an eye out for flying debris and use extra caution near trailers, vans, or vehicles carrying lightweight cargo. Some vehicles shouldn't be driven. It's best not to drive a trailer, van, or other "high-profile" vehicle in high winds.
- While driving in inclement weather, slow down and allow greater following distance. It takes longer to stop on wet or icy roads, so instead of staying the usual 3-4 seconds behind the car ahead, give it 8-10. Large trucks take longer to stop.
- Four and all-wheel drive vehicles will not stop or steer better in icy conditions than two-wheel drive vehicles.
- When driving in a multiple lane road during snow and ice conditions, stay in the lane that is most clear and avoid unnecessary lane changes. Be sure to use directional signals when changing lanes to indicate your intentions.
- Steering and braking are more difficult on snowy or icy roads. Steer with smooth, careful movements. Avoid any abrupt braking that could cause you to lose control. With anti-lock brakes, apply constant, firm pressure to the pedal. If you have to take evasive action to avoid hitting something else, it's best if possible to steer your way around the obstacle than to brake.
- If you get stuck in snow, straighten your wheels and accelerate slowly to avoid spinning the tires. If it's safe to get out of the car, use flares to alert other cars to your presence and use sand under the drive wheels or use your shovel to dig some of the snow out. If the wheels continue to spin and you can't get un-stuck, do not get out of the vehicle. Turn on your emergency flashers and phone for help.
- While traveling in severe winter weather and you come across a road maintenance vehicle, slow down and move out of the way to give them plenty of room to help clear the roadway. If behind a road maintenance vehicle, stay behind it until it is safe to pass. They have a limited field of vision while at work.
- Slow down and be extra cautious near chain-up and removal areas. There are often people out of their vehicles.
- If you must abandon your car during a snowstorm, pull as far off the road as safely possible to avoid blocking other vehicles and snow removal equipment.
- If you must get out of your vehicle alongside the road during inclement weather, use reflectors such as reflective tape or flashing lights to be better seen by passing vehicles.
- During periods of ice or snow, Transit service may be rerouted, cancelled, or delayed. Know your bus snow route but expect delays. Find winter weather Transit schedule links and a Public Transportation checklist through TakeWinterByStorm.org.