

Winter Driving Tips

Purpose

Living where we do, we are not regularly exposed to the unique challenges of winter driving except for a few months out of the year. The first time each year that we experience winter driving proves to be particularly challenging. We have often forgotten just how different winter driving can be, and what adjustments we must make in order to be a safe driver in adverse conditions. Here is a reminder, and some suggestions which should help keep you safe.

Introduction

Each year during the first few snowstorms, we see a definite increase in motor vehicle crashes. Most of the time, people have simply not adjusted their driving habits to compensate for the conditions. Typically, it has been eight or nine months since we last experienced winter driving. Over that time, traditional fair-weather habits have formed, and our winter driving skills have diminished.

During winter weather, visibility is often reduced, vehicle traction and vehicle control are diminished, and stopping distances are increased. It is important that drivers take the time to readjust driving habits to properly fit the current conditions.

Other Safety Precautions

During winter months you should consider having additional supplies in your vehicle which might prove quite helpful and necessary. You will likely need a good ice-scraper and brush to remove snow and frost from the vehicle's windows. Visibility is extremely important in winter driving. Keep your fuel tank almost full. If you get stuck and must wait for help, having enough fuel will allow you the ability to keep your vehicle running so you can stay warm. If you become stranded, run the engine and heater for no more than 10-15 minutes every hour. Hopefully, you have kept your vehicle properly maintained. A good battery is a necessity as it will be challenged during extremely cold temperatures. Check your anti-freeze prior to winter and make sure it will sufficiently protect your vehicle during the winter cold. Keep windshield wipers in good working condition, and the wiper fluid reservoir full. Winter cold will affect the pressure in the tires and the cold may reduce tire pressure 1-2 psi for each 10 degree drop in temperature. Having good snow tires or all-season tire radials with sufficient tread depth is important.

Other items that you might consider keeping in your vehicle during winter months are a shovel, jumper cables, blankets, non-perishable snacks, a flashlight, extra jackets, gloves, and sock caps. A bag of sand over the rear axle can be helpful in rear wheel drive cars. Sand can also be distributed under tires to assist with traction if you become stuck.

Summary

Preparation and Precaution are our recommended driving strategies during the winter. Prepare by doing those things necessary for safe vehicle operations prior to the cold weather coming. Then, simply use precaution by just slowing down and being more deliberate. Ease into the acceleration and leave yourself plenty of room between the vehicles ahead of you to allow for a proper stopping distance. Be

aware of the weather forecast for your area. Allow sufficient time to get to your destination and expect weather and traffic related delays. If you must travel in adverse conditions make sure you let someone else know of your travel plans. Remember that bridges can become slick before other roadway surfaces. If your vehicle has ABS (Anti-lock Braking) brakes, keep pressure on the brake pedal and do not pump the brakes. If your vehicle is not equipped with ABS brakes, gently pump the brakes, and maintain control of the vehicle, and carefully steer in the direction where you want the vehicle to go. Remove snow from your vehicle's windows, headlights, and taillights. Use your headlights even during the day. We discourage the use of cell phones or any other devices which distract your attention from safe driving.

If you have any other questions, please contact the Glendale Police Department Crime Prevention Officer at 414-228-1753.



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