



## Nine Driving Tips to Keep You Safe in Alberta This Winter

Winter is coming, and that means so are hazardous driving conditions. As winter approaches take extra care to stay safe while driving. Here is a list of nine ways you can keep you and your family safe while driving this winter:

### 1. Pack an Emergency Kit

Before you drive prepare for the event of an emergency by keeping an emergency kit in your car. This will help you stay safe if you get caught in severe weather conditions. Here are a few items that you always keep in your car in the winter:

- A warm blanket
- An extra pair of clothes and shoes
- Non-perishable foods
- Waterproof matches
- A candle
- A first aid kit
- A flashlight and batteries
- Booster cables
- An ice scraper
- A snowbrush
- A snow shovel

### 2. Always Travel on a Full Tank of Gas

Another safety precaution to take is to always fill up your gas tank before traveling in winter conditions. If you get stranded or have to pull off the road, you will be able to stay warm for a longer period of time.

### 3. Purchase Winter Tires

Consider replacing your car's tires with specialized seasonal ones. Winter tires provide better traction because they have deeper grooves and stay flexible in colder conditions. This means that they will give you more control over your vehicle while driving on snow or ice.

Always check and maintain your tire pressure, including your spare tire.



#### 4. Check Local Weather Conditions Before You Drive

Before setting out check your local weather forecast. Plan ahead for hazardous conditions and stay tuned in to the radio for changing traffic patterns and alternate route information. Be aware of any local weather warnings for the following conditions:

- Blizzards
- Heavy snowfall
- Wind-chill
- Cold wave advisories
- Freezing rain

Avoid traveling in major storms. If you do need to travel stay informed of the current weather conditions so you can decrease the chance of getting caught in a dangerous situation.

#### 5. Make Sure You Can See and Be Seen

Take steps to maintain visibility while driving in wintry conditions. Replace your old windshield wiper blades if they are worn out. You will want to make sure they can clear your windshield in any condition. Before you drive clear off your windshield, side and rear windows, and mirrors. Make sure there is no snow buildup on the roof of your car, as this can slide onto your windshield when you brake.

Drive in a way that makes it easy for other drivers to see you. When making a turn or changing lanes, use your signal well in advance. This will give drivers behind you enough time to slow down. Always check your side and rear mirrors, and look over your shoulder before changing lanes. Keep your headlights on at all times.

Keep your distance from snowplows, sand trucks, and other utility vehicles. If you are too close, it is hard for them to see you. These vehicles also tend to kick up snow and sleet behind their tires, so be careful if you try to pass.

If you need to pull off the road to wait out a storm, make sure to use your hazard lights.

#### 6. Adjust Your Speed to Match Road Conditions

It is only safe to travel the posted speed limit in normal road conditions. In dangerous conditions decrease your speed to maintain control of your vehicle. Not only will this keep you safe, but it is also a legal obligation. You can be charged with a traffic offence if you do not adjust your speed for the weather

#### 7. Allow Greater Stopping Distance

Maintain a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. On wet or slick surfaces this distance should be at least three times farther than in normal conditions. Be aware that



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Anti-lock braking systems (ABS) do not decrease stopping distance. Instead, these braking systems help you control your braking and prevent you from sliding.

### 8. Focus on Smooth, Steady Driving

Accelerate and brake gradually. Abrupt changes in speed can cause you to slide and lose control of your vehicle. Downshift when you descend a hill to save your brakes and prevent sliding. Keep a safe speed and avoid braking through curves.

It is important to maintain a steady speed in hazardous conditions but remember to never use cruise control in the winter.

### 9. Watch for Black Ice

Black ice is a thin coating of transparent ice that blends into asphalt. Black ice is dangerous because it is hard to spot. To avoid slipping on black ice, slow down as you approach intersections, bridges, and ramps. These areas are prone to black ice buildup.

Follow these nine winter driving tips and you will feel more confident driving this winter. Remember to stay calm and patient as you drive in hazardous conditions. Focus on safe, defensive driving and you will be able to better protect yourself and your loved ones.