



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

January, 2015



Safety Tips: Safe Winter Driving



Winter driving can be hazardous in some sections of the USA. However, here in Mississippi, it is somewhat irregular. Some years are worse than others, but there are precautions that need to be taken for protection for one's safe being.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHSTA) has derived 3 P's for safe winter driving:

PREPARE – for the trip

PROTECT – yourself

PREVENT – crashes on the road

PREPARE- Trips & Local Driving-

Maintenance of your car for the winter is critical for local trips to work and even more so for extended trips for work or play.

Maintenance checks should include:

Battery – sufficient voltage for winter use (takes more power in the winter due to the cold).

Belts – should be in good condition with no frays or breaks.

Tires – sufficient tread, air pressure and no cracks or breaks on the tire walls.

Coolants and lubes – coolants for the radiator and lubrication levels in the transmission, chassis, engine and brake system.

Windshield Wiper Reservoir – no leaks in the tank or hoses and sufficient fluid in the tank.

Windshield Wiper Blades – no dry rot so that there are no streaks on the windshield or breaks in the blades.

Window defrosters – both front and rear units are in good working condition.

PROTECT- Yourself-

We get “rusty” from one winter to the next on winter driving habits, so there are some precautions that we should review in advance of the onslaught of bad weather:

- Before the first snow or icing conditions are forecasted, we should make a practice run to get re-oriented with handling our vehicle in wintry conditions. Practicing this orientation is best when you can use an empty parking lot.
- As we drive in wintry conditions, we should driver slower and very cautious, observing the weather conditions and remaining cognizant of other motorists.
- Get totally familiar with the braking system and how to control it in inclement conditions. If your vehicle is equipped with the anti-locking system, apply the brakes firmly with continuous pressure. If you have the conventional braking system, pump the brakes gently.
- As you drive in slick road conditions, remember to stay calm, ease off the accelerator and carefully steer in the direction that you want the front of your vehicle to go, if you find yourself in a skid.

- Stay off of the gas and brake pedals until you are able to have full control of the vehicle. Using this procedure, the professionals call this “steering into the skid,” which brings the back end of the vehicle in line with the front.
- If you are renting a car, get familiar with all the controls before you leave the lot. Check the owner's manual for details of using the various controls.

PREVENT-

There are steps of prevention to be cognizant of in all driving conditions, normal and wintry. Additionally, there are other issues that apply mainly to inclement weather. We should have a travel plan for local trips and for distance travel, emergency packets in our vehicle, especially for distant trips, and re-familiarize ourselves with rules to follow in case of an accident on the road.

- For short commutes to work, make sure family members know when to expect you back home after work. For traveling longer distances, one should have a written plan to leave with the family denoting departure and arrival times, your travel routes, overnight lodging, possibly persons for emergency contact - in case you can't be reached.
- Even though our weather conditions aren't as drastic as other sections of the US, we do experience some conditions that warrant having an emergency kit in our vehicle. Items to consider are:

Bottle water	Jumper cables
Non-perishable food items	Extra medicines (if required, especially for long trips)
Blanket	Shovel/ice scraper
Flashlight w/ extra batteries	
Flares and markers	
Cell phone and charger	
- Wear your seatbelt, and if you have passengers, make sure they have theirs on.
- If you get stalled or have to stop on the road, stay with your car.
- Be careful when running the engine that you don't get asphyxiated from carbon monoxide. Open the window periodically to get some fresh air and allow the CO₂ to escape. Keep the exhaust clear of snow and run the engine just enough to stay warm.
- A “no brainer” for any driving conditions is to abort the use of alcohol and drugs. Neither is a mix with driving or any other conditions.
- Keep your eyes open for pedestrians along the roadways and streets.
- In all inclement weather conditions- allow more distance and drive slower to help prevent a crash and to have better control of your vehicle.

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201 11/24/2014
Excerpts: safecar.gov
www.osha.gov

STOP ACCIDENTS BEFORE THEY STOP

YOU!!

LEAVE SOONER <> DRIVE SLOWER

LIVE LONGER