

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

- If your vehicle needs a tune-up or any regular service, get it done now. Be sure to check the battery, tires, coolant system, hoses, belts, water pump, spark plugs, wipers, and all fluid levels.
- Always maintain at least half a tankful of gas. Not only can it give you better traction, but can be vital in case you get stuck and have to run the engine periodically to keep warm.
- Know your vehicle. Every vehicle has different handling characteristics. You should know what your vehicle can and cannot do in the snow. Remember, that 4-wheel *drive* does not mean 4-wheel *stop*. A 4-wheel-drive vehicle will not stop any better than a 2-wheel-drive vehicle in icy conditions.
- Be sure of your route. Don't go exploring in the back country, or take unfamiliar routes without directions.
- Be sure you have good tires. The Colorado State Patrol recommends at least $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch of tread. All-season radials on a front-wheel-drive passenger vehicle are adequate for most situations. Snow tires on most rear-wheel-drive vehicles are usually adequate. Speaking of tires, it's always a good idea to have a set of tire chains with you. . .and be sure you've practiced putting them on before you need them.
- Always have some basic supplies in your car—"just in case."
- In poor visibility, don't ever drive faster than you can see ahead. High speeds in poor or no visibility can lead to pile-ups (large chain-reaction accidents).
- When driving in the snow (or ice), do everything slowly. Even if you maintain control of your vehicle, not everyone else will. Don't ever be fooled into a false sense of security. Do everything slowly and gently. Accelerate slowly, turn slowly, and brake slowly. Speaking of braking. . . be sure to leave extra space between you and the vehicle in front of you.

TRACTION & BRAKING

- If your car will be parked a long period of time while it is snowing, try to back into the garage or parking so space so that when it's time to move, you can pull out rather than back out. For rear-drive cars, the bare spot where the car has sat may provide enough traction to get you going. For front-drive cars, backing in snow is more difficult.
- If you have rear drive, always load your passengers back to front.
- If you are stuck, try rocking the car gently back and forth. (Never change gears while moving or accelerating). Avoid spinning the tires in one spot because this heats up the tires and digs you in deeper. (Sand or a bag of kitty litter works miracles).
- If the main traffic lane is slippery and you're having trouble getting up a hill, try driving slowly with two wheels on the edge of the roadway.
- Try to avoid going up or down a hill right behind another car. Be sure to give significant distance and then pace yourself.
- To correct a skid—turn the wheel the *direction* of the skid. If your rear end starts sliding to the right, turn your wheel to the right.
- Brake gently with a "pumping" motion. However, if your vehicle has ABS brakes, then as a general rule, brake with continuous pedal pressure.
- Decelerate well in advance of a turn or stopping point.
- When descending a hill, pick your maximum safe speed throughout the descent with gentle on/off braking. Never do all your braking at the bottom of the hill.