

December Safety Topic

Winter Driving

Take it Slow

Driving in the winter can be harrowing, especially if there is snow, sleet, hail, or ice. Although there tend to be fewer traffic fatalities during the winter months, there are more crashes, and the crashes that occur tend to be more serious. If employees heed a few simple tips, it can help ensure safe trips during the winter. Check the weather before you go if the weather is frigid, you're going to want to warm up the car before you drive it. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in an enclosed area, such as a garage. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that a car running in an attached garage is never safe, even with the garage door open. If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm if possible. But if you must travel, make sure you share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave. Clean all your sensors before you drive, including backup or blind-spot monitoring camera lenses. If it snowed the night before, make sure to brush off your car – even the roof – before you take off. Remember to slow down and take your time. Understand what your car can do.

Technologies available in many cars today can be particularly useful in winter weather. Some of the more useful features for inclement weather include:

- Adaptive headlights, which move side to side as the vehicle turns
- Anti-lock brakes, which help prevent wheels from locking and allow the driver to steer safely
- Electronic stability control, which works automatically to help the driver maintain control of the car during hard steering maneuvers
- Traction control, which helps your wheels gain traction on slippery surfaces

Prepare Your Car for Winter Besides checking the weather, it's important to get your car ready for winter driving. Check for open recalls by entering your license plate number at [checktoprotect.org](https://www.checktoprotect.org). If you have a recall, get it fixed as soon as possible. Have a mechanic check the condition of the following vehicle systems before heading out on the road:

- Ignition
- Brakes
- Wiring
- Hoses and fan belts
- Spark plugs
- Distributor
- Battery
- Tire tread depth and air pressure
- Antifreeze level

Don't leave home without these In an emergency situation, in addition to a full tank of gas and fresh antifreeze, the National Safety Council recommends having these with you at all times:

- Properly inflated spare tire or tire sealant
 - Shovel
 - Phone charger
 - Jumper cables
 - Tow and tire chains
 - Bag of ice melt, or rock
 - Flashlight and extra batteries
 - Windshield washer fluid
 - Ice scraper and snow brush
 - Bottled water and nonperishable, high-energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, protein or energy bars, dried fruits, and hard candy
 - Blankets, mittens, hand warmers, socks, and hats
- Winter road trips – even short ones – are a great way to celebrate with family and friends. Being prepared can ensure a safe and happy time is had by all. If in doubt don't drive.

