



Cold Weather Driving

Living and working in Wyoming, means having to drive in cold weather. In Wyoming, the weather can change very quickly. Many accidents could be avoided if you take time to learn and practice these tips for driving safely during snowy and icy conditions:

Perhaps the deadliest danger of all is "black ice." Black ice forms on a roadway, usually due to snow melting and re-freezing. Since it is almost invisible, drivers fail to recognize black ice conditions and may drive at normal speeds-often resulting in very serious accidents. Always be alert to the possibility of black ice when temperatures are near or below freezing. Pavement that looks dry but may be darker in color and dull-looking should alert you to the presence of black ice.

Allow yourself enough stopping distance. During slippery conditions stopping distances can triple. Driving at a slower speed, anticipating stops at traffic lights and intersections, and applying brakes sooner than normal will help ensure accident-free stops. When braking, brake carefully with short, rapid application of the brakes unless your vehicle is equipped with an automatic braking system. Always allow plenty of space between you and other vehicles to minimize the need for quick stops. **Don't use your cruise control in winter conditions!**

Acceleration, turning, and passing also present dangers during winter. Accelerate slowly to avoid loss of traction and subsequent loss of control. Turn slowly, with caution, to avoid sliding into a stationary object or the path of an oncoming vehicle. Avoid sudden movements. Pass with care because passing lanes are not maintained as well as driving lanes. During a skid, steer cautiously in the direction you want the car to go.

Here are some other tips you should remember for driving safely in winter:

- Always use your seatbelt.
- Turn on your headlights during adverse weather conditions. Overcast skies and falling snow limit visibility. It is important to see and be seen.
- Like all the signs say, bridges and overpasses freeze before the roadway.
- Remember that driving in winter weather conditions causes physical and mental fatigue and reduces reaction times. Get plenty of rest and adequate nutrition. Don't drive while you're sleepy or on medication that causes drowsiness. If you feel drowsy, pull over to the side of the road or into a road stop; take a nap or get out and walk around.
- Prepare your vehicle well ahead of time. Check fluid levels, tire pressure, lights, and the battery. Have a mechanic give your vehicle a winter check-up and make any necessary repairs.

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- Stock an emergency kit containing heavy clothes and a blanket, traction material such as sand or kitty litter, tire chains, a small shovel, first aid kit, flashlight, jumper cables, and a bright cloth to use as a flag.

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