
Cold weather driving

It is that time of year again.....cold weather is upon us! Unfortunately, the cold weather brings hazardous conditions such as snow, ice, reduced visibility, and slippery roads. Whether you're going to work, heading to the store or visiting family, it is important to stay focused on the road conditions before and during your drive. Icy roads, strong winds and wet conditions contribute to thousands of crashes a year and sometimes results in fatalities. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in the US in 2021 there were 395 fatal crashes and an estimated 22,325 injury crashes that occurred as a result of snow and sleet conditions at the time of the crash.

Here is a list of tips to follow prior to driving:

- Check weather forecasts and road conditions before heading out.
- If the travel conditions are severe, give yourself extra time or consider delaying travel until it is safer.
- Check the vehicle's tires for proper inflation and tread depth. Low air pressure and worn-down treads effect the tires' performance on snow and ice. If possible, switch out to winter tires as this will allow for better traction.
- Ensure all vehicle systems are in working order, including brakes, lights, battery, and heating systems.
- Keep emergency supplies in your vehicle in the event you break down or get into an accident. Items such as a blanket, extra clothing, flashlight, non-perishable food, water, shovel, ice scraper and sand or kitty litter for traction.
- Always travel with a fully charged phone as it could come in handy if something happens.

Here is a list of tips to follow when driving:

- Always drive slowly and cautiously.
- Reduce your speed and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles. It takes longer to stop on icy or snow-covered roads.
- Accelerate and decelerate gradually to avoid skidding and avoid sudden movements that could cause loss of control.
- When approaching bridges and overpasses, be especially careful, as these areas freeze first and can be slippery. Approach them with extra care and reduce speed.
- Cruise control is a great feature but do not use it during slippery conditions. It's best to have full control over acceleration and deceleration.
- Stay alert and focused to the road, your surroundings and especially other drivers.
- Keep distractions, such as phones or food, to a minimum and keep both hands on the wheel for better control.
- When approaching intersections, slippery roads can make it challenging to stop or turn, so be sure to stay focused.
- Familiarize yourself with how to handle a skid. First you must remain calm, then turn your wheels in the direction the back of the vehicle is sliding and avoid slamming on the brakes or overcorrecting.
- Obey road closures, detours, and instructions from authorities during severe weather conditions.

As you can see, there are plenty of steps you can take this winter to protect yourself, employees and your family. If you determine the conditions are dangerous it is often better to stay off the roads unless absolutely necessary. Consider delaying travel until conditions improve or use public transportation. Familiarize yourself with safe driving practices and share the information with others. There are plenty of websites available to obtain information on weather conditions like your local news and the State Highway Patrol <https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/>.

Unfortunately, we cannot control dangerous weather conditions but we can take steps to make travel safer.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Andy Sawan at 330-819-4728 or by email Andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com.