

12 Survival Tips for Winter Driving

Like it or not, winter is here. To help keep roads safe, think about safety before you head-out on the road. Prepare your vehicle, plan your trip and slow down in winter conditions.

1. **Create a ‘survival kit’.** Your survival kit should include items such as: gloves, booster cables, small shovel, windshield wiper fluid, first aid kit, torch, snow brush, candles, safety vest, water bottles and non-perishable energy foods. Put the kit in the trunk of your car

2. **Check weather and road conditions often.** Choose the route you’ll take ahead of time and check the weather forecast to make sure you know what to expect before you hit the road.

3. **Keep a safe distance behind snow plows.** If you find yourself behind a snow plow, maintain a safe distance. Snow plow drivers do not always have the best visibility and can create clouds of snow that can reduce your visibility, as well.

4. If you don’t already have them, **get winter tires.** They provide better traction, handling and braking and can shorten your braking distance by as much as 25 per cent. All-season tires are not the same as winter tires. They lose their grip when the temperature dips below 7 C. Drivers with winter tires can get *lower insurance rates*.

5. **Slow down and give yourself extra travel time.** Older drivers have slower reaction times and reduced night vision.

6. **Clear snow and ice from all parts of your vehicle.**

7. **Wear comfortable clothes; wear layers.**

8. **Keep your gas tank full.** It will help reduce moisture in the fuel system and also adds extra weight for traction.

9. **Keep OPP numbers handy** and travel with a fully-charged cellphone. The non-emergency number for the OPP is 1-888-310-1122.

10. **Avoid using cruise control on slippery roads.** It’s easy to lose control of your vehicle in bad weather if you rely on cruise control. If driving conditions are really bad, or in the event of a serious ice storm or blizzard — just avoid driving altogether.

11. **Figure out the best way to recover from a skid** for your vehicle. How your vehicle responds to a skid depends on whether or not it has rear wheel, front wheel or four wheel drive. If your vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), learn how to use it correctly.

12. **Get up-to-date road traveller info from the interactive map at www.Ontario.ca/511** where you can see up-dated road conditions, closures and snow plow locations. Or, just call 511 on your phone.

