

Winter Driving

According to the Federal Highway Administration, more than 70% of the roads in the U.S. are located in regions that receive more than five inches of snow each year. That has serious implications; every year, more than 1,300 people are killed in car crashes involving snowy, icy or slushy roads. Another 116,800 are injured as a result of these winter hazards.

Common Winter Challenges

1. **Snow-covered roads:** Snow on the road dramatically affects a driver's ability to brake or maneuver. Areas where the road curves and drivers can't see what's ahead are even trickier because they allow less time for drivers to react if they encounter snow or ice.
2. **Reduced visibility:** Reduced daylight, sleet, rain, snowfall and dirty or foggy windows all contribute to reduced visibility.
3. **Black ice:** Black ice usually forms when the temperature rises above freezing during the day, allowing snow to melt and form puddles. When temperatures drop in the evening, the water refreezes and creates a thin coat of transparent ice. (It's called black ice because it appears to be the same color as the pavement.) Black ice is often found on bridges or below overpasses, so drivers should be particularly cautious when traveling those areas during winter months.
4. **Untreated residential roads:** In most cases, these lesser-traveled roads haven't been treated with road salt. Because of this and because they have less traffic, snow and ice can accumulate more easily. Some particularly dangerous areas to watch out for include driveways, parking lots and rural roads.
5. **Decreased traction:** When there's inadequate traction, the vehicle's wheels may spin and drivers may lose control, sliding and/or being unable to brake effectively. Having time to make the right driving decision is critical to getting out of these perilous situations safely.

Safety Tips

1. Maintain a distance of at least six seconds between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
2. Avoid sudden braking or lane changes in winter weather.
3. Keep your eyes moving and check their mirrors every five to eight seconds to detect threats from the sides and rear early.
4. Drive at a slower speed
5. Have winter supplies packed in your vehicle.
6. Check your vehicle pre-trip to ensure lights and flashers are working.



