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Winter driving in Alberta - safety comes first

Edmonton... Poor visibility, icy roads and cold temperatures can mean an unpleasant and dangerous driving experience but preparation and attitude will make a big difference.

Tips on how to manage winter driving conditions:

- Maintain your vehicle. Have it tuned up regularly. Make sure that your vehicle's battery, tires, exhaust system, windshield wipers and heating system are in good working condition. Consider replacing your all-season radials with winter tires: they are safer.
- Make sure you have sufficient windshield washer fluid in the reservoir and that it is rated in the -40°C temperature range. Keep extra washer fluid in your vehicle, since weather conditions can change rapidly, especially in southern Alberta.
- Plan your route ahead of time if you are traveling a long distance. Let someone know your destination and expected time of arrival.
- Go to www.transportation.alberta.ca/611.htm to check weather and road conditions before travelling. If the weather is inclement, stay off the roads unless your trip is absolutely necessary.
- Clear snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors and the roof of your vehicle. After starting your vehicle, wait for the fog to clear from the interior of the windows so you will have good visibility. Remember, it's against the law to drive when windows or windshields are obstructed by mud, frost, steam or anything else.
- Do not use cruise control in winter.
- Use a cellular phone only in emergency situations and when you do, pull well off the road to make or receive a call.
- If you are on the highway and driving in the lane adjacent to an emergency vehicle or tow truck with their lights flashing, you must reduce your speed to 60 km/h or less if the posted speed is lower.
- Don't tailgate or follow too closely when road conditions or visibility are poor.
- Exercise extra caution when approaching steep hills or sharp curves.
- When following a snowplow, stay at least 30 metres back and do not drive into the snow cloud the plow makes. Be patient and do not pass a snowplow, especially on a two-lane highway. Plows will pull over every eight to 10 kilometres or when safe to do so to allow vehicles to pass.

Beware of icy roads

Sudden changes in temperature can cause road surfaces to become slippery. Water, either freezing or melting, creates hazards — pay careful attention to the following situations:

- Intersection areas may ice up more quickly because of vehicle exhaust, engine heat, skidding and wheel spin. Allow more time and distance for stopping and starting. The

most important thing is to slow down.

- Black ice caused by moisture freezing is difficult to see. So, if the asphalt looks shiny and black instead of grey-white, be suspicious.
- Bridge decks and overpasses tend to form slippery patches more readily than other road surfaces. Use extra caution and try to avoid any unnecessary lane or speed changes.

For more information, contact the Office of Traffic Safety at 780-422-8839 or your regional traffic safety coordinator. To find your local coordinator, visit www.saferoads.com and click on Contact Us, then the [Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator](#) on the left-hand side.

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