

Driving in snow and ice

Safety on snowy, icy roads

- Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop.
- You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.



If your rear wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
- If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
- If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.
- If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse — this is normal.



If your front wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
- As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.



If you get stuck...

- Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.
- Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction.
- Try rocking the vehicle. (Check your owner's manual first — it can damage the transmission on some vehicles.) Shift from forward to reverse, and back again.

If you become stranded...

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation.
- To attract attention, light two flares and place one at each end of the car a safe distance away.
- Hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna.
- If you are sure the car's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending upon the amount of gas in the tank.
- Keep at least one window open slightly. Heavy snow and ice can seal a car shut.
- Eat a hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

Necessary equipment

An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time and you must be prepared. In addition to making sure you have a tune-up, a full tank of gas, and fresh anti-freeze, you should carry the following items in your trunk and replenish after use:

Bag of salt or cat litter



Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack



Jumper cables



Tow and tire chains



Shovel



Flashlight and extra batteries



Windshield cleaner



Non-perishable, high-energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy



Tool kit



Wooden matches in a waterproof container



Reflective triangles



Scissors and string/cord



First aid kit



Ice scraper and snow brush



Brightly colored cloth