

MDOT Winter Weather Driving Safety Tips

Driving in Snow and Ice

The best advice for driving in winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. If you must drive in winter weather conditions, make sure your car is prepared. MDOT offers the following safety tips when driving in winter weather.

Driving safely on 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. Do not slam on your brakes.
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- Keep your lights and windshield clean.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
- *Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.*
- Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter 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.

Helpful Tip:

Service your vehicle before winter weather begins. Replace your wiper blades, test the battery and make sure the braking, suspension, charging and cooling systems are each working properly.

Emergency Items during Wintry Weather:

- Jumper cables
- Blanket
- Shovel
- Windshield de-icing spray
- Ice Scraper