

Winter Driving Preparedness

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The leaves are falling, and the temperatures are starting to get cooler and we all know what comes next, that nasty four-letter word, S-N-*-W. So, I guess it is about that time to start thinking about winter driving preparedness.

The weather here can change quickly and that means road conditions can change rapidly. Here is some information to make sure that you and your vehicle are prepared for winter driving.

For vehicles make sure that all the fluids are full, the heater, defrosters and all lights are working properly. Switch out the summer tires for winter tires and don't forget to check the spare tire as well. Check the tread depths and air pressure in the tires, replace/refill if necessary. Check the windshield wipers to make sure they clear the windshield completely and if cracked, replace them.

Take the summer emergency kit out of your vehicle and replace it with the winter emergency kit. You want to make sure that you have a blanket, hand warmers, small shovel, ice scraper, snow brush, kitty litter or sand, extra windshield washer fluid, flashlight, extra batteries, non-perishable food, water, first aid kit, cellphone charger, supplies for babies/small children as well as activities to occupy the kiddos, supplies for pets, and any medications needed. You can check the full list of items at PennDOT.gov/safety.

Rapidly changing weather conditions can lead to decreased visibility and icy roadways. If this should occur decrease your speed and increase the following distance to the vehicle in front of you. Use caution when crossing over bridges or overpasses as they freeze before roadways.

Only travel if necessary and always wear your seat belt. Check road conditions, closures, delays, and weather at 511PA.com or the 511PA app. Should you get stuck on the roadway during a storm, put the hazard flashers on, stay in your car and keep an eye on snow depths. You want to make sure that the tailpipe of your vehicle is free from snow. If a vehicle is left running and the tailpipe gets covered, carbon monoxide can build up inside the vehicle which can lead to severe sickness or death.

Remember that if the weather is bad, just stay home if you are able to. Less traffic on the roadways means the less chance of being involved in a crash and less traffic makes it easier for road crews to clear the roadways.

For questions, comments or to request a winter driving program, please email me at tfox@hsnetwork.org. You can also follow me on Facebook @safetyfox or on Instagram at: [highwaysafetynetworkd5](https://www.instagram.com/highwaysafetynetworkd5). This is a PennDOT funded project.