



## Driving in Snow and Ice

**W**inter driving takes some special preparation. Get your car ready for the season by getting a winter tune-up, adding antifreeze, and switching to winter weight oil. Keep your gas tank over half full during winter months, and carry emergency supplies such as blankets, a shovel, flares, and sand. If you don't have winter tires, carry snow chains and learn how to use them before you need them (in states where they are legal.)

### Before You Start

Before you set out into winter weather, check the weather forecast and be prepared to postpone your trip if a storm is brewing. Clear snow and frost completely off your car—you'll need all the visibility you can get. When you set out into stormy weather, let your friends know where you're going and when you expect to arrive. Don't drive if you're tired or intoxicated.

### Skid Control

Your worst problem in snow and ice is poor traction on the road. Follow these tips to protect yourself from skids:

- Obey speed limits.
- Stay four seconds or more behind the car in front of you.
- Slow down at a turn or bend.
- Avoid braking heavily on icy roads, and stay alert so you will have time to begin stopping well in advance.
- Watch out for icy patches, especially on bridges and shady spots.

- If you skid, take your foot off the gas and turn in the direction you want the car to go. Don't use the brake during the skid. Keep looking at a target on the horizon 15–30 seconds ahead that is in the direction you want to go. Steer toward that target.

### Improve Visibility

Boost your visibility by keeping your wipers in good order. Consider using winter wipers for snow. Keep your wiper fluid reservoir full of winterized wiper fluid. If necessary, stop to clear snow off your windshield, headlights and taillights. Where there is glare from snow, wear sunglasses during the day, and use your low beams at all times to make your car more visible, even in daytime.

### If You Get Stranded

If bad visibility or car trouble forces you off the road, try to park in a high spot well out of traffic. Tie a bandanna to your antenna to alert motorists of your presence. Turn on your flashing lights. Keep warm by using blankets and keeping your hands and feet close to your body. If you must run the heater, make sure the tail pipe is clear first. Then run the heater no more than 10 minutes per hour.

Though you may be tempted to go for help, it's almost always safer to stay inside the car, unless you know for sure that you can get to help within a few minutes.