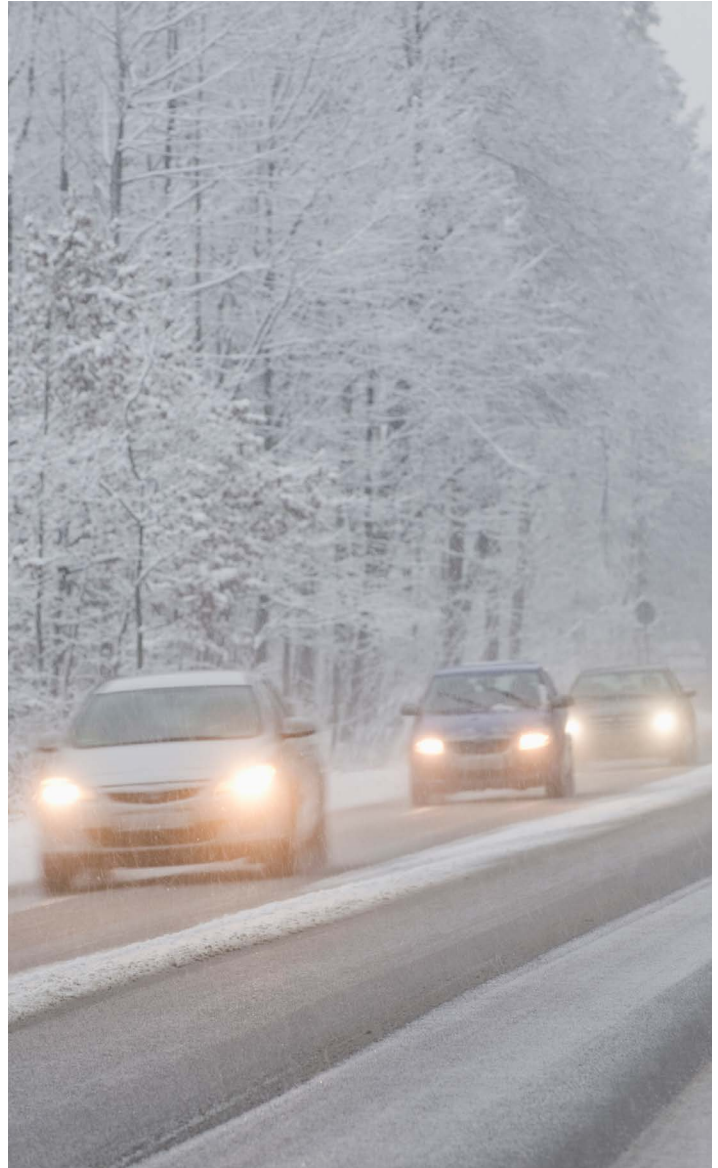


State Auto® Claims and Risk Engineering

Driving Safely in Winter Weather

The leading cause of death during winter storms are vehicle accidents. Many accidents could be avoided if drivers learned and practiced these tips for driving safely during snowy and icy conditions.

- Failing to allow yourself enough time to stop is a major cause of winter-driving accidents. During slippery conditions, stopping distances can triple. Driving at a slower speed, anticipating stops at traffic lights and intersections, and applying brakes sooner than normal will help ensure accident-free stops.
- When braking, brake carefully with short, rapid application of the brakes. Always allow plenty of extra space between you and other vehicles to minimize the need for quick stops.
- Acceleration, turning and passing also present dangers during winter.
 - Accelerate slowly to avoid loss of traction and subsequent loss of control.
 - Turn slowly, with caution, to avoid sliding into a stationary object or the path of an oncoming vehicle. Avoid sudden movements.
 - Pass with care because passing lanes are not maintained as well as driving lanes.
 - During a skid, steer cautiously in the direction you want the car to go.
- Always use your seatbelt.
- Turn on your headlights during adverse weather conditions. Overcast skies and falling snow limit visibility. It's important to see and be seen.
- Like all the signs say, bridges and overpasses freeze before the roadway. Use extra caution on these.
- Driving in winter weather conditions causes physical and mental fatigue and reduces reaction times. Get plenty of rest and adequate nutrition. Don't drive while you're sleepy or on medication that causes drowsiness.



Beware of Black Ice

Perhaps the deadliest danger of all is “black ice.” Black ice is ice that forms on a roadway, usually due to snow melting and refreezing. Since it's almost invisible, drivers fail to recognize black ice conditions and may drive at normal speeds – often resulting in very serious accidents.

Always be alert to the possibility of black ice when temperatures are near or below freezing. Pavement that looks dry but appears darker in color and dull-looking should alert you to the presence of black ice.

How to Prepare for Winter Driving

- Prepare your vehicle for winter driving — check fluid levels, tire pressure, lights and the battery. Have a mechanic give your vehicle a winter check-up and make any necessary repairs.
- Stock an emergency kit in case your vehicle breaks down or you're stuck in heavy snow. Here's a checklist of items for your auto survival kit:

Auto Survival Kit

Assemble a survival kit for your automobile with the following items. Storing some of these supplies in a small bag or backpack will make them more convenient to carry if you need to walk.

- Blankets
- Bottled water
- Change of clothes
- Coins for telephone calls
- Fire extinguisher - multipurpose, dry chemical type
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency signal device (light sticks, battery-type flasher, reflector, etc.)
- Flashlight with fresh batteries
- Food (nonperishable - nutrition bars, trail mix, etc.)
- Gloves
- Local map and compass
- Rope for towing, rescue, etc.
- Paper and pencils
- Pre-moistened towelettes
- Prescription medicines
- Battery-operated radio with fresh batteries
- Small mirror for signaling
- Toilet tissue
- Tools (pliers, adjustable wrench, screwdriver, etc.)
- Whistle for signaling
- Jumper cables
- Duct tape

Cold Weather Health & Safety

Serious health problems can result from prolonged exposure to the cold. A common cold-related problem is hypothermia.

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous as a person may not know it is happening.

Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

Victims of hypothermia are most often elderly people with inadequate food, clothing or heating; babies sleeping in cold bedrooms; and people who remain outdoors for long periods— hikers, hunters, etc.

Hypothermia Warning Signs

Adults:

- Shivering/exhaustion
- Confusion/fumbling hands
- Memory loss/slurred speech
- Drowsiness

Infants:

- Bright red, cold skin
- Very low energy

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