



The Snow Fox's Winter Driving Tips

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When driving in snowy weather:

- Drive a full-time all-wheel drive vehicle if possible (each tire gets drive power). Next best is four wheel drive (in reality one front and one rear tire get power). Next best is front wheel drive (able to pull your vehicle along in snow, plus weight of engine is over tires for traction). Worst is rear wheel drive – especially a pickup truck.
- If you do have to drive a rear-wheel drive vehicle, make sure you have some weight in the back. A couple sandbags in the back of a pickup truck makes a huge difference in traction.
- Carry and use proper chains/cables for your tires. Only use them on icy & snowy roads – they don't help on dry roads and are hard on the road. If you are spending the winter driving continuously on ice & snow, snow tires might be a good idea (check with your dealer).
- Small zip ties are great for tying off extra cable/chain links.
- Don't use cruise control in bad weather – Your vehicles computer may not take road conditions into account when accelerating and braking.
- Maintain momentum uphill – Keep steadily moving and don't stop if you don't have to. It is a lot easier to keep moving on snowy and icy roads than to start moving.
- Ride your brakes downhill – Keep it slow so you stay in control and don't need to slam on the brakes. Going downhill a four wheel drive vehicle has no advantage over a two wheel drive one. It's all about gravity and braking traction.
- Anti-lock brakes are nice, but if you don't have them you can get the same effect by pumping your brakes up and down instead of simply depressing them. To tell if you have them, push hard on your brakes on an empty, level straightaway (only if it is safe). If you feel a pulsing through the pedal, you have anti-lock brakes. Again, if you don't have anti-lock brakes, when you want to slow down fast on a bad road pump the brake pedal up and down to avoid them locking up & losing traction.
- If you start to slide turn a bit INTO the slide direction and use a little gas. Don't brake - that will just make the slide worse. Getting the wheels moving with the direction of slide will help generate static friction (where each point of the tire is not moving in relation to where it is contacting the ground) and with static friction you can use your tires to pull/push you back on track.
- Don't stop with one end of your vehicle in a downhill dead end – without gravity to help get you going it can be VERY hard to get out.

- If you get stuck don't spin your tires – try rocking back and fourth, from drive to reverse, gradually gaining the momentum to get out of the depression.
- Carrying a tow strap is a good idea – They are cheap, and sometimes a little pull is all you need to get out of a slick spot.
- Beware of shadows & bridges – Ice can linger in these areas long after it has melted everywhere else.
- Lean over with your head against the drivers side window and adjust your driver side rear-view mirror so that from that position you can just barely see the side of your vehicle. Lean the same distance in the other direction and adjust the passenger side rear-view mirror the same way. If you did this right, there should now be a continuous field of vision from drivers side rear-view mirror to middle rear-view mirror to passenger side rear-view mirror, with very little overlap. It takes a little getting used to, but this panoramic arrangement almost eliminates blind spots!
- A clean, raw potato can be used to prevent you windows from fogging. Cut it in half and rub the cut surface of the potato on the window. Leave to dry without touching.
- Sunglasses cut glare. Amber ones also improve contrast – good for when it's raining or snowing.
- Spraying silicone lubricant around your door seals will keep them from freezing shut.
- You can use isopropyl or rubbing alcohol to de-ice your windshield (alcohol has a lower freezing point than water). Don't use hot water to de-ice your windshield - The thermal shock may crack it.
- To speed defogging your windshield turn your car's heater on full-blast (hot air can hold more moisture), direct the air to the top vents flowing over the windshield, turn the A/C on (the AC's cooling coils pull more moisture out of the air), and turn air recalculation OFF (you want to get rid of humid air from inside the car and pull in colder, drier air from outside - then warm it so it picks up the moisture from the windows).
- Don't neglect safety when out of your vehicle – A pair of Ice Cleats or other slip-on shoe traction systems really helps when walking on icy ground. Or just make your whole foot waterproof and grippy with a pair of Neos Overshoes.

Remember: driving in inclement weather is dangerous. Even if you are careful and do **everything** right, you can still slide, hydroplane, hit black ice, or just get run into by the other guy. Don't drive in bad weather if it can be avoided. Don't drive in weather that you cannot handle.

Have fun. Drive safe.
 "You always get experience after you need it."