



'Tis the season for snow and ice, slipping and sliding... and winter driving. Now is the time to get your car tuned up; brakes, battery, fluid levels, and exhaust system checked. Make sure your heater and defroster are in good working order and seals on doors and windows in top shape. Replace your wiper blades. Get ready for snow with antifreeze and winter weight oil. Carry emergency supplies - sand, salt, shovel, snow scraper, booster cables, blankets and flashlight.

Here are a few proven methods that can reduce your chances of being involved in a automobile accident this winter season.

1. Of all the things you can do to make winter driving less stressful, giving yourself a little more time is the most important. Going slower is the key to safe driving on slippery roads, and it's pretty hard to go slower when you're in a race with the clock.
2. Allow at least 3 times that distance to reach a full stop and avoid skidding. This means your safe distance behind the car in front of you should be 3 times as far.
3. Begin braking 3 times as far away from the stoplight or corner where you turn.
4. Pump the brakes as you slow down for a turn rather than holding them down.
5. Use low gears on slick surfaces, especially hills and curves.

If in spite of your precautions you find yourself beginning to skid, DO NOT BRAKE. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and gently turn your car in the direction of the skid.

If you get stuck in snow, avoid spinning your wheels - you'll only dig in deeper. Instead, shovel snow away from the wheel paths and pour salt, sand, or cinders around the drive wheels to improve traction.

To sum up: keep your car or truck in top shape, allow extra time and space on the road, and listen to the weather forecast - sometimes the best winter driving strategy is to stay home.