

Winterizing Your Vehicle



**Tips on maximizing safety
through the winter months of
driving**

**Compiled by the
Division of Student Affairs**

Winterize Your Car

Driving in the winter means snow, sleet and ice that can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers and unforeseen dangers. To help you make it safely through winter, here are some suggestions from the National Safety Council to make sure that you and your vehicle are prepared.

Weather

At any temperature -- 20° Fahrenheit below zero or 90° Fahrenheit above -- weather affects road and driving conditions and can pose serious problems. It is important to monitor forecasts on the Web, radio, TV, cable weather channel, or in the daily papers.

Your Car

Prepare your car for winter. Start with a checkup that includes:

- Checking the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Changing and adjusting the spark plugs.
- Checking the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspecting the distributor.
- Checking the battery.
- Checking the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Checking antifreeze levels and the freeze line.

Your car may need a tune-up (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts and faster response on pick-up and passing power.

Necessary Equipment

An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time and you must be prepared. In addition to making sure you

have the tune-up, a full tank of gas, and fresh anti-freeze, you should carry the following items in your trunk:

- Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack
- Shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- Bag of salt or cat litter
- Tool kit

Essential Supplies

Be prepared with a "survival kit" that should always remain in the car. Replenish after use. Essential supplies include:

- Working flashlight and extra batteries
- Reflective triangles and brightly-colored cloth
- Compass
- First aid kit
- Exterior windshield cleaner
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Wooden stick matches in a waterproof container
- Scissors and string/cord
- Non-perishable, high-energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy.

In addition, if you are driving long distances under cold, snowy, and icy conditions, carry supplies to keep you warm such as heavy woolen mittens, socks, a cap and blankets.

If You Become Stranded...

If you are stranded, follow these tips:

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation.
- To attract attention, light two flares and place one at each end of the car a safe distance away. Hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna.
- If you are sure the car's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending upon the amount of gas in the tank.
- To protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia use the woolen items and blankets to keep warm.
- Keep at least one window open slightly. Heavy snow and ice can seal a car shut.
- Eat a hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

Last thoughts as you prepare for a trip:

- Before leaving to go anywhere, clear all ice and snow off of all glass, front, back and sides, off of the mirrors, the headlights and taillights and off of your license plates. Check your windshield wipers to see if they move freely and make full contact with the windshield.
- Don't leave home without your fully charged cell phone.
- Make sure you let friends and family know when you plan to leave on a trip, your general route and expected time of arrival.
- Allow additional time to reach desired destinations.