

# Winter Driving Tips

## General

- Check the weather forecast and road conditions before embarking on a trip. Check your local media, call 511, or go on-line for information. If conditions are expected to be less than ideal, you may want to postpone a discretionary trip or use more caution if the trip cannot be delayed.
- Always maintain a reasonable speed and safe following distance from the vehicle in front of you. Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances and reduced visibility.
- Drive below the posted speed limit when road conditions are less than ideal. Speed limits are intended for normal pavement conditions.
- Turn on lights to see and be seen. Keep head and tail lights clear of snow.
- Avoid using cruise control in winter driving conditions. You need to be in control of your car when accelerating based on road conditions
- If your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, understand how to use them and what to expect when they are used.
- Don't drive through "white out" conditions. Be patient, wait it out until conditions improve.
- Be aware that ramps and bridges may freeze before other roadway segments.

### Road Conditions

511 - Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

If calling from out of state or from a phone system not participating in the 511 program dial 800-288-1047)

[www.511ia.org](http://www.511ia.org)

### Weather Conditions

Iowa

[www.weatherview.iowadot.gov](http://www.weatherview.iowadot.gov)

National Weather Service

[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

## Meeting or Overtaking a Snowplow

- When overtaking a snowplow, be aware that snowplows often travel only 5-35 mph. When you spot a snowplow ahead, slow down to reduce speed differential.
- Snowplows may need to stop or take evasive action to avoid stranded vehicles. Maintain a safe following distance and be prepared to stop.
- Be cautious in areas of blowing snow as it could conceal a snowplow.
- If you do pass a snowplow, be sure that you have clear vision ahead before passing. Allow plenty of room when passing, and don't cut in too quickly. On two lane roads, operators will pull over periodically to let vehicles pass.
- On multi-lane roads, watch for plows operating in the left lane.
- Don't travel beside a snowplow. When encountering a large drift or packed snow, the impact can move the truck sideways.
- Don't attempt to pass a snowplow when visibility is severely reduced.
- Never pass a snowplow on the right. Many snowplows are equipped with a wing blade that expands to the right and may be hidden by blowing snow.
- Move as far away from the centerline of the pavement as you safely can when meeting a snow plow on a two-lane road.
- When two or more snowplows are working together to clear a multi-lane road, do not attempt to pass.

## Preparedness

- Before winter strikes, make sure your vehicle is in good working order. Tires should be in good condition for maximum traction.
- Keep your windshield washer full and have good wiper blades so that you can keep the windshield clear.
- Keep plenty of fuel in the tank. You never know when you may be delayed or stranded.
- Pack a winter survival kit to keep in your vehicle. Suggested items include jumper cables, blankets, candles, matches, water, extra clothing, boots, snow shovel, ice scraper, high calorie non-perishable foods, flashlight with extra batteries, first-aid kit, and sand or strips of carpet for traction.