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**Winter Driving Tips That Will Keep You on the Road and Get You Safely to Your Destination!**

Snow, ice and below normal temperatures have been gripping most of the nation for weeks, often making driving difficult, if not downright hazardous. With a little know-how and some common sense, you should be able to arrive safely at your destination, even when weather conditions are not conducive to driving.

The Federal Highway Administration offers these sobering statistics:

* Over 1,300 people are killed and more than 116,800 people are injured in vehicle crashes on snowy, slushy or icy pavement annually.
* Every year, nearly 900 people are killed and nearly 76,000 people are injured in vehicle crashes during snowfall or sleet.

The [Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association](https://www.tnfirechiefs.com/) and [Volunteer Workforce Solutions](http://www.volunteerfiretn.org/) remind us that preparation is a key ingredient to a safe drive. Check your local forecast, and forecasts along your route, to know what road conditions will be ahead of time. If possible, delay or reschedule your trip until conditions are clear. The number one tip for driving in hazardous conditions is simple, *“If you don’t have to drive, don’t!”*

If you must drive in bad weather, remember to drive defensively! Before you leave, make sure your windows, lights and mirrors are clean and debris free. Slow down! That posted speed limit is for optimal conditions. When the roads are bad, the right speed is often half the allowable limit! Leave extra distance between you and the cars around you. Stopping, turning and maneuvering take longer in bad weather conditions, be sure to put your signals on well in advance to alert other drivers.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) has a comprehensive list of winter driving tips that will help you stay safe and arrive alive when conditions are at their worst.

 **AAA recommends the following winter driving tips:**

* Avoid driving while you’re fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
* Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
* Make certain your tires are properly inflated.
* Never mix radial tires with other tire types.
* Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up.
* Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
* Always look and steer where you want to go.
* Use your seat belt every time you get into your vehicle.
* Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids. Don’t try to get moving in a hurry. And take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
* Drive slowly. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads. Accelerating, stopping, turning – nothing happens as quickly as on dry pavement. Give yourself time to maneuver by driving slowly.
* The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.
* Know your brakes. Whether you have antilock brakes or not, the best way to stop is threshold breaking. Keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
* Don’t stop if you can avoid it. There’s a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.
* Don’t power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill as slowly as possible.
* Don’t stop going up a hill. There’s nothing worse than trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.

AAA has compiled an informative brochure regarding how to drive safely in adverse winter condition. The brochure is downloadable and can be accessed at http://bit.ly/arrivesafely.

**Insert your Department name** relies on brave men and women to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer firefighters to ensure that every call for help is answered. Men and women with almost every skill set are needed. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact **Insert your Department name at Insert website** or call **Insert your Dept. phone number**.

There are volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer fire department for citizens willing to work hard. To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter and joining your local volunteer fire department, please visit [www.VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org).

***About the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (TFCA)****The TFCA provides leadership to career and volunteer Fire Chiefs, Chief Fire Officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The TN Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) also encourages the professional advancement of the fire service to ensure and maintain greater protection of life and property from fire and natural or man-made disasters. The TFCA’s mission is to provide leadership to career and volunteer chiefs, chief fire officers, and managers of Emergency Service Organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their professionalism and capabilities. More information about the TFCA is located at* [*www.tnfirechiefs.com*](http://www.tnfirechiefs.com) *.*

***About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)****The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 and partnered with the* [International Association of Fire Chiefs](https://www.iafc.org/) *to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. 19 departmental groups, consisting of 64 departments, were selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings. More information about the Tennessee VWS can be found at* [*www.VolunteerFireTN.org*](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org)*.*

*(Insert info about your department in similar format to above)*