



Outdoor Safety during Extreme Cold

Dress Warmly and Stay Dry

Adults and children should wear:

- **a hat**
- **a scarf or knit mask** to cover face and mouth
- **sleeves** that are snug at the wrist
- **mittens** (they are warmer than gloves)
- **water-resistant coat and shoes**
- **several layers of loose-fitting clothing**

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind. Wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. Stay dry -- wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Also, avoid getting gasoline or alcohol on your skin while de-icing and fueling your car or using a snow blower. These materials in contact with the skin greatly increase heat loss from the body. Do not ignore shivering. It's an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

Avoid Exertion

Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Otherwise, if you have to do heavy outdoor chores, dress warmly and work slowly. Remember, your body is already working hard just to stay warm, so don't overdo it.

Understand Wind Chill

As the speed of the wind increases, it can carry heat away from your body much more quickly. When there are high winds, serious weather-related health problems are more likely, even when temperatures are only cool.

Prepare Your Car for Winter

You can avoid many dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead. Have maintenance service on your vehicle as often as the manufacturer recommends. In addition, every fall:

- Have the radiator system serviced, or check the antifreeze level yourself with an antifreeze tester. Add antifreeze, as needed.
- Replace windshield-wiper fluid with a wintertime mixture.
- Replace any worn tires, and check the air pressure in the tires.

During winter, keep the gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

Winter Survival Kit for Your Car

Equip your car with these items:

- blankets
- first aid kit
- a can and waterproof matches (to melt snow for water)
- windshield scraper
- booster cables
- road maps
- compass
- tool kit
- paper towels
- bag of sand or cat litter(to pour on ice or snow for added traction)
- tire chains (in areas with heavy snow)
- collapsible shovel
- high-calorie canned or dried foods and a can opener
- flashlight and extra batteries
- canned compressed air with sealant (for emergency tire repair)
- brightly colored cloth

What to Do if You Get Stranded

Staying in your vehicle when stranded is often the safest choice if winter storms create poor visibility or if roadways are ice covered. These steps will increase your safety when stranded:

- Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna as a signal to rescuers.
- Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area.
- Wrap your entire body, including your head, in extra clothing, blankets, or newspapers.
- Stay awake. You will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems.
- Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, opening one window slightly to let in air. Make sure that snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe -- this will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to improve your circulation and stay warmer.
- Do not eat un-melted snow because it will lower your body temperature.