

WINTER DRIVING SUGGESTIONS from the Office of Safety and Security

1. For **optimal control** when driving on snow or ice, or in heavy rain, **reduce your speed** considerably and **keep both hands on the wheel** at the **three and nine o'clock positions**.
2. The secret to avoiding **skidding out of control** on snow, ice, and standing water is to make **SMOOTH and GRADUAL** motions when steering, braking, and accelerating.
3. Imagine a **pitcher of water** on the hood of your car; try to drive so smoothly that you don't spill a drop. Now, imagine an egg lodged between your foot and the gas or brake pedal; try to depress the pedal so gently that you don't break the egg. Remember, **SMOOOOTH**.
4. If you start to **skid**, take your foot off the brake and the gas, and steer gently toward the skid to straighten your vehicle and regain control.
5. If you are having a hard time slowing or stopping on slippery roads, try this: **SHIFT INTO NEUTRAL**. This simple act removes the engine power from the wheels to help you steer, slow, and stop more easily on snow and ice.
6. **Bridges and overpasses freeze first and melt last**. When the temperature approaches freezing, what may appear to be a wet road could be dangerous **black ice**.
7. Maine and most other states have **hands-free driving laws**. The law states that no one can operate a vehicle *"while using, manipulating, talking into, or otherwise interacting with a hand-held electronic device or mobile telephone."* If you must use your **phone** while driving, either use the hands-free feature or pull over and stop in a safe place, well off the roadway.
8. **Slow down and don't tailgate**. Stay back at least two car lengths for every ten miles per hour of speed, to give yourself plenty of reaction time.
9. Always wear your **seat belt** and make sure all passengers are buckled. Most people killed in car crashes were found unbuckled.
10. Maine has a **"Move Over Law"** requiring drivers to pass stopped emergency vehicles at a prudent speed and to move one lane over, if it is safe to do so.
11. Keep your **car doors locked**. This may help safeguard you and your passengers in a collision, and you never know who might try to get in (or out).
12. Before you leave, make sure your **tires and wipers** are in good condition and all your **lights** are working. Refill your window-washer reservoir.
13. Don't forget an ice scraper and snow brush. Remove ALL snow and ice from your vehicle before driving it.
14. Use your **headlights day and night**, in good weather and bad, to help other drivers and pedestrians see you sooner.
15. Be prepared for any emergency. Keep extra warm clothing and a hat, boots, and gloves in your vehicle in case of a breakdown or accident. A bright flashlight can be a lifesaver.
16. **If you break down or have an accident**, pull as far off the roadway as possible to stay clear of oncoming traffic. Turn on your hazard flashers. Call 911 or AAA for assistance. It is generally safest to stay buckled inside your vehicle, but stand well away from traffic if you have to get out.
17. **Don't drive after drinking and/or using other drugs, period**. You will be arrested for drunk driving if you are stopped and found to have a blood-alcohol content of 0.08 percent (on average, about the equivalent of four twelve-ounce beers). You will also be arrested if you are under the influence of drugs, including marijuana and some prescription drugs. Remember, there is **"zero tolerance"** for drivers under the age of twenty-one who have consumed any amount of alcohol at all—a violation will result in a license suspension of one to two years.
18. **Most highway crashes** happen by driving too fast for the road and weather conditions, driver inattention/distraction, and following too closely. Of course, the best advice in bad weather is to stay off the roads until the weather improves and the roads are made safe.

Winter Survival Kit

