Tips for Safe Winter Driving

Your Vehicle:

Get your car serviced now.
Start the season off right by ensuring your vehicle is in optimal condition.
- Visit your mechanic for a tune-up and have your entire vehicle checked for any leaks, bad hoses, or other needed part repairs or replacements.
- If you plan to use snow tires, have them installed now. For existing tires, check to ensure they’re properly inflated, the tread is sufficient with no uneven wear and that the rubber is in overall good condition.

Check your battery.
When the temperature drops so does battery power and it takes more power to start your vehicle in cold weather than in warm weather.
- While at the mechanics, have them check for sufficient voltage. Have the charging system and belts inspected. If necessary, replace the battery and make any system repairs.

Check your cooling system.
When coolant freezes it expands. Such expansion can potentially damage your vehicle’s engine block beyond repair. Don’t let this happen to your vehicle this winter!
- Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle and that it’s designed to withstand the winter temperatures you might experience in your area.
- A 50/50 mix of coolant to water is sufficient for most regions of the county. See your vehicle owner’s manual for specific recommendations.
- Thoroughly check the cooling system for leaks or have your mechanic do it for you.
- If your system hasn’t been “flushed” for several years, have it done now. Over time, rust inhibitors in anti-freeze break down and become ineffective. Coolant also needs to be refreshed periodically to remove dirt and rust particles that can clog the cooling system and cause it to fail.

Fill your washer reservoir.
You can go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid fairly quickly in a single snowstorm, so be prepared for whatever Mother Nature might send your way.
- Completely fill your vehicle’s reservoir before the first snow hits.
- Use high-quality, “no-freeze” fluid.
- Buy extra to keep on hand in your vehicle.

Check your windshield wipers and defrosters.
Safe winter driving depends on achieving and maintaining the best visibility possible.
- Make sure your windshield wipers work and replace worn blades.
- If you live in an area that gets a lot of snow and ice, consider installing heavy-duty winter wipers.
- Check to see that your window defrosters (front and rear) work properly.

Vehicle Emergency Kit
An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time. Be prepared with a “survival kit” that should always remain in your vehicle.
- Working flashlight and extra batteries
- Flares
- First aid kit
- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and jack
- Tow and tire chains
- Jumper cables and toolkit
- Blanket, warm clothes, hat and gloves
- Brightly colored cloth
- A bag of salt, sand or non-clumping kitty litter to use for added traction when a tire is stuck
- Compass
- Extra washer fluid
- Ice scraper, snow brush and shovel
- Wooden stick matches in a waterproof container
- Non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits and hard candy
Your Vehicle Continued…

Inspect your tires.
Regardless of season, you should inspect your tires at least once a month and always before embarking on a long road trip. It only takes about five minutes. If you find yourself driving under less-than-optimal road conditions this winter, you’ll be glad you took the time!
- Check tire pressure and make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer’s suggested PSI of air pressure, which is listed in your owner’s manual and on a label inside the driver’s door.
- Keep a tire pressure gauge in your vehicle at all times and check pressure when tires are “cold” – meaning they haven’t been driven on for at least three hours.
- Look closely at your tread and replace tires with uneven wear or insufficient tread. Tread should be at least 1/16 of an inch or greater on all tires.

On the Road:

Know your car.
Every vehicle handles somewhat differently; this is particularly true when driving on wet, icy or snowy roads. Take time now to learn how to best handle your vehicle under winter weather driving conditions.
- Practice cold weather driving when your area gets snow but not on a main road! Until you’ve sharpened your winter weather driving skills and know how your vehicle handles in snowy conditions, it’s best to practice in an empty lot in full daylight.
- Drive slowly. It’s harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. On the road, sufficiently increase your following distance so you’ll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.
- A word of caution about braking: Know what kind of brakes your vehicle has and how to use them properly. In general, if you have anti-lock brakes, apply firm pressure, if you have non anti-lock brakes, pump the brakes gently.
- If you find yourself in a skid, stay calm and ease your foot off the gas while carefully steering in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go. This procedure, known as “steering into the skid,” will bring the back end of your car in line with the front.

Plan your travel and route.
Keep yourself and others safe by planning ahead before you venture out into bad weather.
- Check the weather, road conditions, and traffic; plan to leave early if necessary.
- Don’t rush! Allow plenty of time to get your destination safely.
- Familiarize yourself with directions and maps before you go, and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time.
- Keep your gas tank close to full. If you get stuck in a traffic jam or in snow, you might need more fuel to get home or keep warm.
- If road conditions are hazardous, avoid driving if possible. Wait until road and weather conditions improve before venturing out in your vehicle.

Learn what to do in a winter emergency.
If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, follow these safety rules:
- Stay with your car and don’t overexert yourself.
- Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don’t run your car for long periods with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically—just long enough to stay warm.

The Mirabito STOP-DWI Holiday Classic is a project of the Broome County STOP-DWI Program and Mirabito Energy Products to promote an anti-substance abuse and drunk-driving message to student athletes. The Mirabito STOP-DWI Holiday Classic is more than just top caliber basketball - it’s an educational experience. The Mirabito STOP-DWI Holiday Classic uses basketball as a tool to create a unique and exciting learning experience for youth. Through involvement in the Holiday Classic high school athletes are encouraged to become leaders in the effort to deal with alcohol and drug abuse.

Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving
The Consequences Aren’t Worth the Risk.
Stay Safe this Holiday Season...

Did you know??
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 32,885 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2010. Thirty-one percent of those fatalities involved alcohol-impaired drivers.
- Data also shows that 70% of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities occurred when the driver’s blood alcohol concentration was .15 grams per deciliter or higher.
- On average, 25 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes per day during December 2010. Drinking and driving can quickly turn a holiday celebration into a tragedy.
- Getting caught for impaired driving can result in arrest, loss of driving privileges, higher insurance rates, lost time at work, court costs, fines and attorney’s fees and many other unwanted consequences.

You Can Prevent Tragedy
- Plan ahead; be sure to designate a sober driver before the party begins.
- If you will be drinking, do not plan on driving. Even one too many drinks increases the risk of a crash while driving a motor vehicle. Remember that, Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving!
- If you are impaired, find another way home. Use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation.
- Be responsible. If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement. Your actions may save someone’s life and inaction could cost a life.

December 27 – 30
Tournament Competition at Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena

The Mirabito STOP-DWI Holiday Classic is more than just top caliber basketball - it's an educational experience. The Mirabito STOP-DWI Holiday Classic uses basketball as a tool to create a unique and exciting learning experience for youth. Through involvement in the Holiday Classic high school athletes are encouraged to become leaders in the effort to deal with alcohol and drug abuse.
Medications and Driving Don’t Always Mix

When it comes to drinking alcohol and driving, most people are pretty clear: you don’t do it. But what about when you’ve taken some painkillers, or a cold remedy? What about the medications prescribed by your doctor?

Prescription medications have made aging, and the health conditions that accompany the process, much easier to manage. Unfortunately, these medications and driving don’t always mix. Many medications can cause drowsiness, sap energy and slow reaction time.

An additional factor can be dangerous drug interactions. Many times, older people see more than one doctor, each of who may prescribe a different type of medication. When taken together, some drugs can multiply impairment and make it extremely risky to operate a vehicle.

Not all medications affect your driving, but quite a few do. Some medications can also interact with alcohol, making drinking and driving more dangerous, even if you have had less to drink than the legal alcohol limit. The types of drugs most likely to increase the risk of a car crash are:

- treatments for diabetes that lower your blood sugar
- treatments for epilepsy or Parkinson disease
- calming drugs such as tranquilizers
- stimulants and antidepressants
- drugs that affect the nervous system, such as strong painkillers, antipsychotics and beta-blockers

Read the fine print. If a medication you’re taking is labeled “Do not use while operating heavy machinery,” let someone else drive. If any medication makes you feel sleepy or disoriented, don’t drive. Also remember to:

- Inform your doctor about any non-prescription medications you are taking. This includes alcohol, which can interact with some drugs and cause serious side effects.
- Discuss your medications and their effects with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Always check with your doctor before stopping any medication.

Source: www.bcstopdwi.com

Roadwise Rx
Learn About Your Medications Online

www.RoadwiseRx.com

Some over-the-counter medications can increase crash risk by up to 41 percent. Reduce your risk of a crash by using AAA’s free online tool, Roadwise Rx. Explore how your medications impact your safety behind the wheel. Roadwise Rx is a tool designed to help you learn more about your medications and how they may affect your driving.
Save Your Friend’s Life Over the Air Waves Contest

Create a 30 second audio public service announcement (PSA) on any of the 4 topics listed below. Entries will be accepted from high school students, organizations, classrooms and groups in grades 9-12. Home-schooled students may also enter.

- Drowsy Driving
- Safety Belt Use
- Driving Distractions
- Speeding

Submit each PSA entry on a CD (one entry per CD)
Prizes and recognition will be given to the winners. Winning entries will be aired on radio stations to promote teen driving safety throughout New York State.

For more information and entry forms, go to:

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Deer Safety: Tips for Avoiding a Collision

**Deer Statistics:**
- Dawn and dusk are the times you are most likely to encounter deer along the roadside.
- Deer breeding season runs from October through early January. During this time they are highly active and on the move. This is when deer-vehicle collisions are at their peak.
- Though deer may wander into suburban neighborhoods, they are most frequently found on the outskirts of town and in heavily wooded areas.
- As pack animals, deer almost never travel alone. If you see one deer, you can bet that there are others nearby.

**Preventive Techniques:**
- **SLOW DOWN!** If you are driving through an area known for high deer populations, slow down and observe the speed limit. The most conservative you are with your speed, the more time you will have to break if an animal darts in your path.
- Always wear your seat belt. The most severe injuries in deer-vehicle collisions usually result from failure to use a seat belt.
- Watch for the shine of eyes along the roadside.
- Use your high beams whenever the road is free of oncoming traffic. This will increase your visibility and give you more time to react.

The deadline for entries is March 22, 2013.

Broome County Traffic Safety Events

Car Seat Fitting Stations
Broome County Fitting Stations provide FREE child safety seat inspections for families and caregivers as well as provide education and guidance on child passenger safety. FREE replacement child safety seats are distributed in the event a seat is expired, recalled or deemed unsafe.

Fitting Station:
December 18th, 2012 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
January 15th, 2013 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
February 19th, 2013 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
March 26th, 2013 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
April 16th, 2013 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
May 21st, 2013 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Located at:
Broome County Sheriff’s Office
155 Lt. Van Winkle Drive, Binghamton, NY
Upper garage area, look for large yellow sign

Please bring:
▪ Your vehicle
▪ Your child
▪ Your car seat
▪ Car seat manual
▪ Vehicle manual

Inspections are done on an appointment basis.

Please call Christine Muss at (607) 778-2807 to schedule an appointment.

Did you know?
▪ Most car seats expire after 6 years from the date of manufacture. (Always check the stickers on your car seat.)
▪ It is unsafe to use recycled car seats or car seats purchased from garage sales.
▪ It is important to always follow the manufacturer’s instructions for proper installation. Do not modify your car seat. Modifications can compromise the safety of your child.
▪ It is important to register your car seat when you first purchase it so you can be notified of future safety recalls.

Broome County Traffic Safety Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 16, 2013
Broome County Health Department
Conference Room A - 4 p.m.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Debra Preston, Broome County Executive