



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Winter Driving

'Tis the season for snow and ice, slipping and sliding...and winter driving. Now is the time to get your car tuned up; brakes, battery, fluid levels, and exhaust system checked. Make sure your heater and defroster are in good working order and seals on doors and windows in top shape. Replace your wiper blades. Get ready for snow with antifreeze and winter weight oil. Carry emergency supplies - sand, salt, shovel, snow scraper, booster cables, blankets and flashlight. Of all the things you can do to make winter driving less stressful, giving yourself a little more time is the most important. More time to get to and from work and more time to stop when you're on the road. Going slower is the key to safe driving on slippery roads, and it's pretty hard to go slower when you're in a race with the clock.

The biggest hazard of winter driving is slippery roads - caused by ice, slushy snow, or rain, especially the first rain after a dry spell when oil and grease have built up on the roads. Remember how far it takes to bring your car to a stop on dry pavement? In winter conditions, allow at least 3 times that distance to reach a full stop and avoid skidding. This means your safe distance behind the car in front of you should be 3 times as far. And you must begin braking 3 times as far away from the stoplight or corner where you turn. Reduce the danger of skidding by driving more slowly and by pumping the brakes as you slow down for a turn rather than holding them down. Use low gears on slick surfaces, especially hills and curves. Test your brakes frequently and never tailgate.

If in spite of your precautions you find yourself beginning to skid, **DO NOT BRAKE**. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and gently turn your car in the direction you want your front wheels to go. Hitting the brakes or turning sharply will only lock you into a skid. If you can't get control of your car it is better to steer into a snow bank or fence than to risk a collision in traffic.

Visibility is another big hazard of winter driving. In heavy snow, keep your lights on. Stop and clean your windshield and lights if necessary. Get off the road before you get stranded by worsening weather conditions.

If you get stuck in snow, avoid spinning your wheels - you'll only dig in deeper. Instead, shovel snow away from the wheel paths and pour salt, sand, or cinders around the drive wheels to improve traction.

To sum up: keep your car or truck in top shape, allow extra time and space on the road, and listen to the weather forecast - sometimes the best winter driving strategy is to stay home.