

Tips to Prepare for Winter Driving

Winter driving conditions can be hazardous due to factors such as snow and ice on the roads. It's important you are prepared for winter driving and your vehicle is up for the challenge.

Each Time You Drive

Winter driving on Alberta roads requires preparation and more time. Here are some tips to remember before you drive:

1. Check weather and road conditions;
2. Allow extra time to reach your destination safely and reduce your speed if necessary to give yourself more time to react; and
3. Be sure to defrost your windows and remove ice and snow from your vehicle to make it easier for you and others to see.

Have Your Vehicle Serviced

While it's best to give your vehicle a through once-over every winter, here are a few items to keep an eye on:

Battery

Battery power decreases as the temperature drops, meaning that it takes more power to start your car in the winter. Batteries older than three years are at greater risk.

Cooling System

Ask your mechanic what antifreeze should be used for your vehicle and the appropriate coolant-to-water ratio to prevent against corrosion and potential freezing.

Engine Oil

If you don't already use synthetic oil, consider making the switch. Unlike conventional motor oil, synthetic oil doesn't thicken in cold weather, it flows better in winter, helping reduce wear and tear on your engine.

Belts & Hoses

Over time, temperature variations can cause engine belts and hoses to crack, bulge and leak. Visually inspect them and if anything looks suspect have a trusted mechanic check your engine.

Brakes

While cold weather doesn't necessarily hurt your brakes, a thorough inspection can ensure the best performance when driving in winter conditions.

Keep in Mind

Tires

Switching to winter tires is the most important thing you can do for cold weather driving. The flexible rubber and deep treads offer better traction on snowy, icy roads. Also, large temperature fluctuations can cause tires to lose pressure, you should check your tires more frequently and refill as needed.

Windshield Wipers & Fluid

Like winter tires, winter wiper blades just work better in frigid conditions. These come equipped with more rugged rubber keeping ice from collecting on the blades and resisting damage from wiping away snow and ice. For improved windshield cleaning, use winter-grade washer fluid, and make sure you refill it often.

Engine Block Heater

Plugging in your block heater is a must once temperatures drop below -15 C. Use a block heater tester to make sure it's working properly before the cold weather arrives.

Gas

Keep a full tank or at least a half tank of fuel. This will help reduce moisture in the gas tank and adds weight to your vehicle. It will also allow you to keep your vehicle running longer if you are stranded in the cold.



Learn Winter Emergency Preparedness

It's important to know what to do before you are in an emergency in case you ever get stuck, such as not leaving your vehicle for risk of losing sight of it and not running your car for long periods of time but instead turning it on long enough to stay warm then turning it off again.

Pack a Winter Safety Kit

Store common tools and supplies in your car in case of an emergency.

- ☒ Jumper Cables
- ☒ Blanket
- ☒ Ice Scraper & Snow Brush
- ☒ First Aid Kit
- ☒ Warm Clothing*
- ☒ Non-perishable Food & Beverages
- ☒ Flashlight & Batteries
- ☒ Tool Kit
- ☒ Cell Phone Charger

- * Warm clothing includes extra jacket, hat, gloves, socks, boots, etc.