

Get To & From The Slopes Safely Be Prepared For Winter Driving!



Prepare your automobile. It's your Safety Capsule!

- We are always excited about making turns in deep powder, amongst trees or on wonderful groomers but first we must be properly prepared for the drive to them and the return drive home. ***In addition, always allow for extra time on the road!***
- Your personal vehicle is generally your mode of transportation. What are you doing to make sure your trip is comfortable and safe?

Get Gased

- There are some basics things you should always do along with additional things which are a must when traveling into the snowy mountains!
- ***ALWAYS FILL YOUR GAS TANK JUST BEFORE ENTERING WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS! YES, IT WILL ADD A FEW MINUTES TO YOUR TRIP AND YES YOU'LL PAY A HIGHER PRICE FOR THE GAS . . . YOU SHOULDN'T CARE ~ BE SURE YOUR "SAFETY CAPSULE" IS FUELED TO CAPACITY!***

Check Road Conditions

- *Check Current Road Conditions prior to and “Safely” get updates when getting closer to mountain driving. In some states you can dial “511”. Below is a direct line list by state.*
- *California Road Conditions: 800-427-7623*
- *Nevada Road Conditions: 877-687-6237*
- *Oregon Road Conditions: 800-977-6368*
- *Washington Road Conditions: 800-695-7623*
- *Idaho Road Conditions: 888-432-7623*
- *Arizona Road Conditions: 888-411-7623*
- *New Mexico Road Conditions: 800-432-4269*
- *Montana Road Conditions: 800-226-7623*
- *Wyoming Road Conditions: 888-996-7623*
- *Utah Road Conditions: 866-511-8824*
- *Colorado Road Conditions: 877-315-7623*

Chain Control Designations In California

- **R1** Chains required, except for autos or pickups with snow tires.
- **R2** Chains required, except for vehicles with four-wheel drive and snow tires on four wheels. ***(All Vehicles Must Carry Chains.)***
- **R3** Chains required; no exceptions. (Note: R3 conditions are rare — the road is usually closed prior to this designation.)

Vehicle Preparation

When was the last time you checked:

- *All vehicle lights to be sure they work and are clear*
- *Tires for safe tread depth & tire pressure*
- *M & S Labeled Tires on 4wheel or All Wheel Drive Vehicles*
- *Windshield wiper fluid & wiper blades*
- *Antifreeze & vehicle battery*
- *Changed your air filter, oil & oil filter*

Prevent the “Shimmy”

- When driving in the mountains, the roads can be severely rutted or have massive potholes. If you feel “frontend shimmy” or “pulling to one side or the other” it’s time to check your tire balance and alignment.
- This will extend your tire wear, improve your gas mileage and have a safer vehicle to drive.
- **Remember ~ tires are the only safety device on your vehicle touching the road unless you’re using chains!**

Chain Control Speed Limit

- *When entering “Chain Control” areas in California, Speed Limit is 30 Miles Per Hour THAT’S FOR ALL VEHICLES!*
- *Check your states laws and please follow them for everyone’s safety!*
- *While you might feel in control at higher speeds . . . the problem is stopping!*
- *Allow greater distance between vehicles.*
- *Ice is ICE not matter what you’re driving!*

When To Activate 4 Wheel Drive

Have you ever questioned when is the correct time to activate your 4wheel drive or other traction control device on your vehicle?

- Never wait for the “Chain Control” check point.
- Noticing a change from rain drops to a “splat” hitting the windshield, that’s when you should flip the switch to 4wheel drive.
- Exterior temperature gauge hits 32 degrees f, be aware of shaded areas and judge the pavement surface.
- If you’ve got 4wheel or all-wheel drive, it’s better to engage it too early instead of too late!

Tip #1

- Practice putting on your chains or other traction devices at home.

Tip #2

- In Foggy, Snowy and Heavy Rain . . . only use your Low Beams and or Driving Lights.
- High Beams will reflect back into your eyes decreasing your ability to see the road clearly!

Tip #3

- On your drive home, there's going to be a lot of moisture in your vehicle. ***When your interior windows fog up ~ Do Not Use Your Vehicles Heater to Clear Them!*** All you'll do is create a "wet sauna" and increase the humidity in your vehicle.
- Use a combination of the Air Conditioner and Defroster or only your Air Conditioner. This will lower the humidity and clear the insides of your windows.

Tip #4

- When in Chain Control areas avoid using your brakes as much as possible ~ leave extra space between vehicles
- Use your transmission to slow down. Yes, it's ok on most vehicles to manually "down shift" allowing the gears to slow down the vehicle
- Braking can cause a skid
- Over accelerating can cause a skid
- If you do skid, do not hit the brakes, turn into the skid and try not to over compensate or panic

What To Carry In Your Safety Capsule

- *When winter arrives, have a “Winter Container” and “Additional Items” which you put in my vehicle.*

The Winter Container

- Low Temperature Windshield Wiper Fluid
- Toilet Paper & Gallon Size Ziploc Baggies
- Traction Devices (Tire Chains or Cables)
- Tarp & Tow Strap
- Kitty Litter
- Wire Brush & Pliers
- Work Gloves
- Plastic Ice Scrapers & Brush

Low Temperature Windshield Wiper Fluid

- Always have Low Temperature Windshield Wiper Fluid (good to minus 15 or minus 20 degrees f) left over from the previous season. When winter arrives begin filling your Windshield Wiper Reservoir with it! The first winter trip for the season should include a stop to a store in snow country to pick up a new jug of Low Temperature Windshield Wiper Fluid.
- Using standard Windshield Wiper fluid will either not squirt, or if it does, it'll freeze across your windshield!
- Rolling down windows in near 0 degree f conditions and sticking your head out to be able to see is not fun!

Toilet Paper & Ziploc Baggies

- You might be thinking “that’s a strange combination”! Well, what do you do if you’re traveling in the mountains, the road closes, you’ve been sitting for hours (it happens!) and “nature calls”? For some it’s no problem to step out of the vehicle and answer nature’s call.
- For others . . . It’s not so comfortable . . . You can complete the equation of toilet paper and Ziploc baggies!
- If necessary, please double the Ziploc and place into a couple of the colored plastic bags or another container you can seal!

Traction Devices

- When driving a 4wheel drive or All Wheel Drive vehicle in California, are you aware you're required by law to carry traction devices (chains or cables) with you?
- If your electric 4wheel drive switch fails while in the snow and ice, you'll be stuck like any other rear wheel drive vehicle without chains.
- Again, in California, it's the law (for this reason) that **all vehicles** carry traction devices when entering chain control areas.
- Check your state laws.

Tarp & Tow Strap

- A Tarp is useful as a ground cover when installing traction devices
- A Tow Strap can get you or another vehicle out of a snow bank and back on the road

Kitty Litter

- No, it's not for use inside your vehicle! But like a commercial shows, it is used for getting out of an icy spot where you might have parked.
- Place the kitty litter on the side of the tire equal to the direction you want to go.
- Don't over accelerate and move slowly.
- It works!

Wire Brush & Pliers

- Checking your battery and being told “it’s good to go” is not a guarantee of when you get to altitude with severe cold temperatures that it’ll work!
- Having a wire brush, pliers and cleaning the battery terminal contacts might get your vehicle to start.
- Replace your battery

Work Gloves

- With a few of the above topics, having a pair of work gloves is much nicer to use on and around your vehicle instead of your ski/board gloves!

Plastic Ice Scrapers & Brush

- Yes, multiple ice scrapers!
- Place one in your Boot Bag and another under the driver seat
- Your Boot Bag goes in with you
- Coming out to your vehicle is when the ice scraper is needed. It also can be used to break an ice seal around the vehicles doors
- The ice scraper under the seat is a backup or can be used by a traveling companion to speed up the process
- ***Clear all the windows***
- The Brush is used to clear snow off of the vehicle

“Additional Items”

- Sleeping bag & Blanket
- Many filled water bottles
- Snacks
- Snow shovel
- Yellow Tinted Sunglasses
- Handy Wipes / Hand Cleaner

Sleeping Bag & Blanket

- Neither takes up a great deal of space, but both will keep you and others warm if your vehicle breaks down or you get caught for hours in a road closure.

Many Filled Water Bottles

- You need to stay hydrated
- Carry enough water for yourself and passengers
- Have extra for the return trip

Snacks

- You should always have some food in your vehicle when traveling
- Doesn't take up a lot of space
- If the road is closed for a while, you will need the food

Snow Shovel

- Yes, carry one with you
- Have you gotten to your destination and found deep snow to get to the front door or garage?
- With a shovel you can clear a path or create a spot to park in a driveway
- There's also times after a day of skiing your vehicle needs to be dug out in a parking lot
- It's essential if you ever "High Center"!

Yellow Tinted Sunglasses

- You can also call them “Happy Glasses”!
- It’s amazing the difference yellow lens make in flat light, snowy conditions, rain, fog or even at night.
- They will cut through the glare and add contrast to your vision enabling you to see better in challenging conditions.

No Matter The Season, Be Prepared

Beyond what you add to your vehicle for the winter, these should exceed the normal day to day items you carry such as:

- Flashlights
- Flares
- Old cd to be used as an “Emergency Mirror”
- Emergency cash
- Handy Wipes / Hand Cleaner & etc

Don't Forget These . . .

Remember to pack:

- Ski/board gear
- Helmet
- Winter clothes

One Final Item To Remember

- If you're tired trade the driving to another person
- ***OR***
- ***Get Off The Road & REST***

Safe Travels!

- *Enjoy your travels to and from the slopes in your safety capsule!*

Dennis Heffley

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