

Winter Driving

A photograph of a snowy road winding through a forest. A large truck is driving away from the camera on the road. The trees are heavily covered in snow, and the overall scene is a winter landscape. The text "Winter Driving" is overlaid in blue on the image.

November 2013

Preparing Your Vehicle

Preventative maintenance is essential to ensuring you are prepared for winter driving – get your car winter ready by performing a winter maintenance check up:

- Check battery and belt condition, cooling and heating systems, tire pressure and tread condition, and electrical and exhaust systems
- Check/replace the antifreeze (coolant) – the cooling system should be filled with 50% water and 50% antifreeze to prevent the engine from freezing
- Replace your windshield wipers with winter blades – these are heavier, push the snow and ice more easily, and have a longer life in the harsh winter months
- Keep an extra bottle of windshield washer fluid in your vehicle in case you run out while on the road
- Check tire pressure frequently – it decreases faster in cold weather
- Have an extra pair of sunglasses in the glove box to protect from the glare of the winter sun
- Prepare/buy a winter emergency road kit

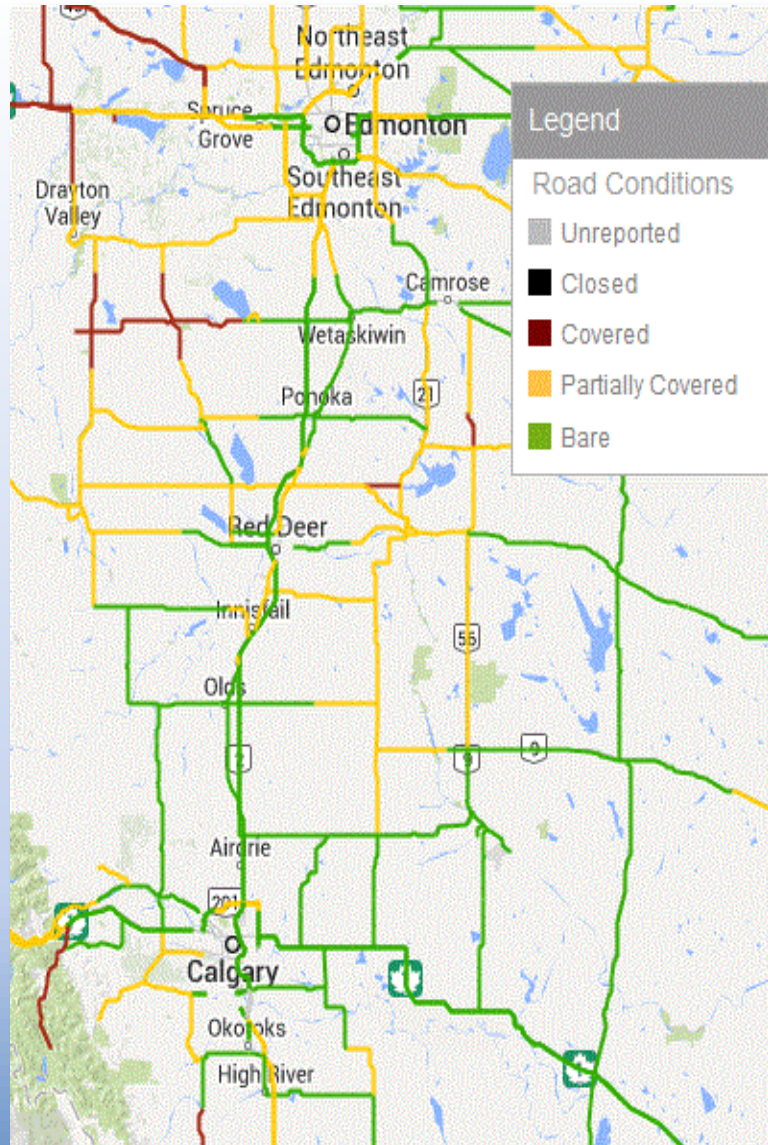
“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” – Benjamin Franklin

Winter Emergency Road Kit

- Keep a winter emergency road kit available in your vehicle at all times throughout the winter season
- Pre-packed kits are available at department stores (Canadian Tire, Wal-Mart, etc.) or you can make your own
- Recommended items to include:
 - Small shovel
 - Ice scraper
 - Small bag of salt/ice-melt
 - Blanket
 - First-aid kit
 - Extra gloves/socks
 - Non-perishable food
 - Jumper cables
 - Flashlight
 - Hand/foot warmers
 - Flares
 - Pylons
 - Bottled water



Preparing to Hit the Road



- Check road conditions prior to departure and plan your route accordingly – avoid partially covered roads when possible and always avoid covered roads (visit www.amaroadreports.ca for real-time road conditions)
- Check the current and hourly weather forecast prior to departure to be aware of changing conditions that can present new hazards:
 - Visit www.theweathernetwork.ca for real-time weather updates
- Clear snow and ice from all windows, mirrors, lights, and the hood and roof
- Always fill the gasoline tank before hitting the open road
- Measure the tire pressure frequently – all-season tires will freeze more quickly and subsequently lose tire pressure faster than winter tires
- Ensure your cell phone is charged before extended trips

Winter Driving Tips

- Drive cautiously and take your time! Do not drive in severe conditions unless absolutely necessary - consider if your destination can wait until the weather passes
- Allow at least three times more space between you and the vehicle ahead of you and decrease your speed, leaving plenty of room to stop – remember that the posted speed limits are meant for dry pavement
- If your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, apply steady pressure and do not pump the brakes – the pulsing of the brakes will be normal
- Avoid using cruise control – winter driving needs your full attention all the time!
- Drive defensively! Stay on the lookout for other vehicles that may be out of control
- Use extra caution on overpasses, bridges, and infrequently used roads – these will freeze first even if the adjoining pavement is in good condition
- Do not pass maintenance vehicles or snow plows and follow the recommended distance posted on the rear of the vehicle – road conditions in front of these vehicles will often be much worse
- Always allow extra time to get to your destination and remain patient in the event of delays



Safe Access/Egress



- An unbalanced weight transfer around sharp, hard corners and surfaces while entering and exiting vehicles requires extreme caution
 - Before entering or exiting your vehicle, assess the surrounding ground conditions for freshly fallen snow that may cover rocks, slippery, and uneven surfaces
 - Always follow the “three point rule” – use handles and edges to keep your balance and pay close attention to your footing... lightly check the surface condition with one foot before transferring your full weight to the ground
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- Remove as much snow and ice from your footwear before entering vehicle
 - When exiting your vehicle, remember that your footwear is warm and the surrounding surface is cold, increasing the risk of slipping
 - Pay attention! It is easy to get distracted when we are arriving home after a long day



- Is my vehicle equipped for the weather?
- What could go wrong?
- Is this trip necessary under the given conditions?
- What do I need to do to address all of the hazards?
- Have I taken precautions for changing conditions?
- Am I prepared for emergencies?