Driving in Snow and Ice

SafeTips from the Naval Safety Center

Quick and easy summaries to find out about something new you're doing or as a refresher for something you haven't done in a while. They're a great training tool to pass around at meetings, through e-mail, or post on bulletin boards.

* If you don’t have to drive — don’t! But if you must, drive defensively and smart.
* Before beginning your trip, know the current road conditions. Call your local highway administration or state transportation department 1-800-367-ROAD.
* Be alert for potential driving hazards including fallen branches and trees, downed electric lines and icy areas, such as shady spots and bridges.
* Leave a few minutes early to allow extra time to get to your destination.
* Slow down. Triple the usual distance between your car and the one ahead.
* Stay in the plowed lane; avoid driving over the ridges between the plowed areas. If you must switch lanes, slow down, signal and move over slowly.
* Don’t pass a snowplow or spreader unless it is absolutely necessary.
* Don’t park along the street. Snowplow drivers can’t fully clear a road if cars are in their way.
* If you skid, steer into the skid. If the back of your car is skidding to the left, for example, turn the steering wheel to the left.
* Don’t pump your brakes, and avoid locking them up. If your brakes lock, take your foot off the brake pedal for a moment.
* If your car has an anti-lock braking system (ABS) and you must brake, be sure to press the brake pedal and hold.
* If you’re involved in a fender-bender, move the cars out of the lanes of travel.
* Keep an emergency winter driving kit with a blanket and flashlight in the car.
* While driving, keep your headlights on. Keep snow and ice off your mirrors, windows and lights.