

Resource Document

Autumn

Driving on Ice

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Narrative:

Driving on ice is a major hazard in winter and causes accidents and deaths among Soldiers and civilians.

Ice is especially hazardous because it can be unseen, such as 'black ice' or lurking under snow and not visible to a motorist.

Regaining control of a vehicle that's lost traction on ice is difficult if not impossible.

Speed is a factor in determining the degree of difficulty a motorist faces when encountering ice on roadways.

Key messages:

- The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it.
- If you have no choice but to get behind the wheel and make a foul-weather trip under less than ideal conditions, make the best of it: remember that preparation and common sense go a long way toward making it a safe journey.
- Steering, braking and traction are important in preventing accidents on ice along with starting out in a lower gear to help with traction issues.
- Other tips for safe winter driving are staying alert, slowing down and staying in control, according to safemotorist.com, presented by the American Safety Council.

Talking points:

- Motor vehicles should be checked prior to winter weather, the same as when summer weather arrives. Maintenance checks include tires and tire pressure, battery, belts and hoses, lights, oil, brakes and exhaust system, heater/defroster, wipers and ignition system.
- For winter weather, keeping food, water and warm clothing in the vehicle makes sense, along with ensuring your cell phone is charged.
- Let someone know when you leave, where you're going and when you should arrive.

Topics/tools:

- Additional tips on driving on icy roads from the Weather Channel include decreasing your speed to leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you. Also, brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- While you're focused on the road, don't forget to ensure other motorists can see you, so turn on your lights to increase your visibility, plus, keep your lights and windshield clean.
- Using cruise control or overdrive on icy roads is a bad idea, according to the Weather Channel. Don't use them on icy roads and be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first.
- Remember, even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
- Motorcyclists who have put their ride into the garage while they dream of warmer good-riding weather should follow instructions in their owner's manual on how to properly winterize and store their bike.
- Winter driving conditions such as rain, snow, and ice dramatically affect the braking distance of a vehicle. The driver's capability to complete a smooth and safe stop is severely limited due to reduced tire traction, according to the American Safety Council.
- Don't try to stretch more miles from your tires during the winter months, adds the ASC. If your tread depth is getting low, it can have serious effects on dry pavement, but those effects are multiplied in wet and snowy conditions. When in doubt, get new tires.
- Tire pressure usually lowers itself in winter and raises itself in summer. Under-inflated tires can cause a car to react more slowly to steering. Every time the outside temperature drops ten degrees, the air pressure inside your tires goes down about one or two PSI. Tires lose air normally through the process of permeation. Drivers should check their tire pressures frequently during cold weather, adding enough air to keep them at recommended levels of inflation at all times, explains the ASC.

For additional information, visit:

http://www.safemotorist.com/articles/winter_driving.aspx

www.safemotorist.com

<https://safety.army.mil/>

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>