

CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Purpose

Living where we do, we are not regularly exposed to the unique challenges of winter driving except for a few months out of the year. The first time each year that we experience winter driving proves to be particularly challenging. We have often forgotten just how different winter driving can be, and what adjustments we must make in order to be a safe driver in adverse conditions. Here is a reminder, and some suggestions which should help keep you safe.

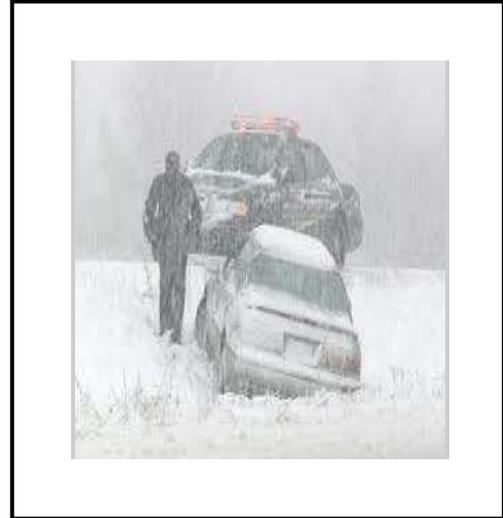
Introduction

Each year during the first few snowstorms, we see a definite increase in motor vehicle crashes. Most of the time, people have simply not adjusted their driving habits to compensate for the conditions. Typically it has been eight or nine months since we last experienced winter driving. Over that time, traditional fair weather habits have formed and our winter driving skills have diminished.

During winter weather, visibility is often reduced, vehicle traction and vehicle control are diminished, and stopping distances are increased. It is important that drivers take the time to readjust driving habits to properly fit the current conditions.

Other Safety Precautions

During winter months you should consider having additional supplies in your vehicle which might prove quite helpful and necessary. You will likely need a good ice-scraper and brush to remove snow and frost from the vehicles windows. Visibility is extremely important in winter driving. Keep your fuel tank almost full. If you get stuck and must wait for help, having a sufficient amount of fuel will allow you the ability to keep your vehicle running so you can stay warm. If you become stranded, run the engine and heater for no more than 10-15 minutes every hour. Hopefully you have kept your vehicle properly maintained. A good battery is a necessity as it will be challenged during extremely cold temperatures. Check your anti-freeze prior to winter and make sure it will sufficiently protect your vehicle during the winter cold. Keep windshield wipers in good working condition, and the wiper fluid reservoir full. Winter cold will affect the pressure in the tires and the cold may reduce tire pressure 1-2 psi for each 10 degree drop in temperature. Having good snow tires or all-season tire radials with sufficient tread depth is important.





Other items that you might consider keeping in your vehicle during winter months are a shovel, jumper cables, blankets, non perishable snacks, a flashlight, extra jackets, gloves and sock caps. A bag of sand over the rear axle can be helpful in rear wheel drive cars. Sand can also be distributed under tires to assist with traction if you become stuck.

Summary

Preparation and Precaution are our recommended driving strategies during the winter. Prepare by doing those things necessary for safe vehicle operations prior to the cold weather coming. Then, simply use precaution by just slowing down and being more deliberate. Ease into the acceleration and leave yourself plenty of room between the vehicles ahead of you to allow for a proper stopping distance.

Be aware of the weather forecast for your area. Allow sufficient time to get to your destination and expect weather and traffic related delays. If you must travel in adverse conditions make sure you let someone else know of your travel plans. Remember that bridges can become slick before other roadway surfaces.

If your vehicle has ABS (Anti-lock Braking) brakes, keep pressure on the brake pedal and do not pump the brakes. If your vehicle is not equipped with ABS brakes, gently pump the brakes and maintain control of the vehicle, and carefully steer in the direction where you want the vehicle to go.

Remove snow from your vehicles windows, headlights, and taillights. Use your headlights even during the day. We discourage the use of cell phones or any other devices which distract your attention from safe driving.

The Lafayette Police Department's Crime Prevention efforts are meant to strengthen the partnership between our members, and the community that we serve. We hope that together, we can make our community safer.

Indiana's Travel Advisory

Indiana has a Statewide Travel Advisory system to help keep a consistent message across the different Counties. The following is an excerpt of that advisory. This explains the different Advisory Levels, and what that might mean for motorists. The State, or individual Counties may make such an Advisory Declaration.

Section 3. Local Travel Advisories

A local travel advisory shall be declared in accordance with IC 10-14-3-29.5 and this ordinance. The purpose of a local travel advisory is to keep the residents of _____ county, Indiana informed of the weather and county road conditions, and to assist County Highway Department in the clearing of the county roadways by eliminating stranded vehicles:

3.1 ADVISORY Level Travel Advisory

This level may be declared when routine travel or activities may be restricted in areas of the county because of a hazardous situation; citizens should use caution or avoid these areas. Schools and businesses may begin to implement their emergency action plans.

3.2 WATCH Level Travel Advisory

This level may be declared when conditions are threatening to the safety of the public. Only essential travel is recommended (i.e. to and from work, emergency situations, etc.). At this level, emergency action plans should be implemented by businesses, schools, government agencies and other organizations.

3.3 WARNING Level Travel Advisory

This level may be declared when roads have become impassable and the County Highway Department is not able to keep the roadways cleared due to extreme weather conditions such as a severe snow fall, high drifts or blizzard like conditions are present. Travel may be restricted to emergency management workers ONLY and essential emergency travel by members of the public as the Board may further direct, such as privately employed health care workers. Further restrictions that the Board deems necessary may be included within the local disaster declaration.