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10 Winter driving tips.

1. The safest tires are studded mud and snow (M/S) tires on all four wheels. Some states do not permit studded tires, so check with your local dealer.
2. Carry emergency clothing in the car. A stocking cap, snow boots, mittens, a pair of coveralls, and a blaze orange vest so you will be seen if you have to walk.
3. If you get stuck, kitty litter is a good way to get traction under your wheels. Carry the litter in a couple of gallon plastic milk jugs. Sand and dirt are ok too, but they freeze solid if any moisture collects on them. Some people carry metal treads, but you have to stop and go back for them. Some carry a few evergreen branches.
4. When driving on ice, always try to drive with 2 tires on the right shoulder of the road. It is usually gravel, and provides better traction than the smooth streets or highways. This won't work if there is snow.
5. Plan your route to avoid stop signs and lights on the top of a hill. People spin their wheels to get started and this creates a bed of ice.
6. To get home safely, you have to be able to see. Every November 1st, buy and install a new set of wiper blades. This is cheap insurance.
7. Sometimes you will want a cold windshield, and sometimes you will want a warm windshield. If it's raining and ice is forming on the car, you want a warm windshield to melt the ice and let the wipers work. If it's cold and snowing, you want the windshield cold so the snow won't stick, and will just blow off with the wind and wipers..
8. If you get stopped on an uphill slope, try this to get started again. Manual transmissions, take off in second gear. Try to get rolling as slowly as possible, if you can, get started without even using the gas pedal. Automatics, it's even easier. Never, ever, spin your wheels, just take off as slowly as possible. Spinning heats up the tires and just handicaps you further. If you can get rolling those first few inches, you can keep rolling.
9. If it's snowing or blowing, put on your lights. If there's a blizzard, put on your flashers.
10. Chains are best. They give more traction than anything else. Put a set of chains on the two driving tires, or better yet, keep a spare pair of tires in the trunk with chains on them. It's lots easier to change 2 tires than it is to install chains in the snow and muck.

Plus, the chains on the spares are fiddle string tight, so they won't hammer the bottom of your car.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Long Handled Snow Brush	Ice Scraper
Jumper Cables	Rags To Clean Slush Off Lights
Chains	Kitty Litter (see #3)
Flashlight, with extra batteries	HELP sign
Work Gloves	Emergency Clothes (see #2)
Extra caps and mittens for passengers	

Though not mentioned in the ASG article, there is another tool that I would not be without during winter driving, or summer for that matter. It is commonly referred to as a Come-along winch. These are hand operated devices that can lift a ton about 8 to 12 feet. And yes Martha, most cars weigh considerably more than a ton, but most of the time, you're not lifting them straight up either. They are available in hardware stores for \$30 to \$40. With one of these winches and some chain, or aircraft cable, you can winch yourself out of just about any situation. It's not as pretty, or as fast as the pretty winches on the big jeeps, but you can bet it's several hundred dollars less expensive too.