

Driving Safety Guide: Snowy Weather Conditions

Driving in snowy conditions significantly increases risks due to slippery surfaces, poor visibility, and potential vehicle malfunctions. Follow these comprehensive safety guidelines for navigating snowy weather safely:

1. Speed Limits

- **Drastically Reduce Speed:** Snow and ice dramatically reduce tire traction. Drive at slower speeds, significantly below posted limits.
- **Consistent and Moderate Speed:** Maintain a consistent and moderate speed to retain maximum control over your vehicle.

2. Following Distance

- **Greatly Extend Following Distance:** Employ at least an "8-second rule" to account for significantly longer stopping distances on snow or ice.
- **Increase Distance on Inclines and Declines:** Give additional space to vehicles ahead on hills, as they might struggle to maintain control and speed.

3. Headlights and Visibility

- **Always Use Headlights:** Keep headlights on (low beams) to maintain visibility and help others see you. Avoid high beams during snowfall as they reflect off snowflakes and worsen visibility.
- **Activate Fog Lights if Available:** Fog lights help improve visibility, particularly in heavier snow conditions.
- **Regularly Clear Snow:** Frequently clear snow from your windshield, headlights, mirrors, and taillights to ensure maximum visibility.

4. Braking and Acceleration

- **Gentle and Progressive Braking:** Use gentle braking techniques to avoid locking wheels, which leads to skidding. Anti-lock braking systems (ABS) should activate automatically to prevent lock-up.

- **Gradual Acceleration:** Accelerate slowly to minimize wheel spin. If wheels slip, ease off the accelerator and gradually reapply throttle gently.

5. Vehicle Control

- **Steering Control:** Turn the steering wheel gently and gradually to avoid skidding. If your vehicle begins to skid, steer gently in the direction of the skid until control is regained.
- **Avoid Cruise Control:** Never use cruise control on snowy or icy roads as it may reduce your ability to control the vehicle effectively.

6. Lane Discipline

- **Stay Centered in Your Lane:** Roads can become unclear due to snow coverage. Follow tracks made by preceding vehicles to stay centered and avoid slipping off-road.
- **Avoid Unnecessary Lane Changes:** Lane changes can lead to loss of traction or vehicle control. Only change lanes when absolutely necessary.

7. Intersection Safety

- **Approach with Caution:** Intersection stopping distances significantly increase in snow. Begin slowing well in advance and approach intersections at lower speeds.
- **Watch for Sliding Vehicles:** Anticipate other vehicles potentially sliding or failing to stop in time. Always check thoroughly before proceeding.

8. Vigilance for Hazards

- **Identify Black Ice:** Snow can conceal black ice—thin, transparent ice on roads, especially prevalent at intersections, bridges, shaded areas, and underpasses.
- **Watch for Snow Plows:** Keep a safe distance from snow plows and sanding trucks. Avoid passing them as visibility ahead is often significantly reduced.

9. Driver Alertness

- **High Concentration Level:** Driving in snow requires constant vigilance. Avoid distractions such as mobile devices or infotainment systems.
- **Plan and Take Regular Breaks:** Snowy driving is fatiguing. Schedule breaks to maintain alertness, particularly during longer journeys.

10. Emergency Preparedness

- **Keep Emergency Supplies:** Equip your vehicle with essentials such as a snow shovel, traction mats, emergency blanket, flashlight, extra warm clothing, water, and snacks.
- **Maintain Adequate Fuel Levels:** Keep your fuel tank at least half-full to ensure heating capability if stranded.

11. Vehicle Maintenance

- **Check Tires and Brakes:** Use winter tires with deep treads specifically designed for snow and ice. Regularly inspect brakes for optimal performance.
- **Test Battery and Antifreeze:** Cold temperatures strain vehicle batteries. Regularly test battery health and maintain antifreeze levels to avoid breakdowns.

Following these detailed measures will enhance your safety, ensuring better preparedness and control while driving in snowy weather conditions.