



# Winter Driving

Vehicle crashes and breakdowns are always costly and inconvenient, but never more so than in the winter months. Winter weather puts a greater demand on vehicle components. It can cause failure in components that were functioning adequately in warm weather. Taking preventive action is the best way to avoid malfunctions and accidents. Inspect and service your vehicle systems and replace any worn components. These guidelines will help you get started.

## Cooling System

- Check the coolant level and test its efficiency
- Examine the condition of the coolant hoses and accessory belts
- Replace the coolant, hoses and/or belts if they are more than two years old

## Charging System

- Check the physical condition and power output of batteries: weak batteries will fail at the onset of cold weather
- Check all electrical connections to the batteries and starter for proper connection and cleanliness

## Fuel System

- Replace fuel filters to allow for proper fuel flow and to eliminate water buildup
- Check the condition of fuel tanks to ensure that the interiors are clean

## Lubricating System

- Check oil level
- Change oil and filters if necessary

## Braking System

- Inspect all brake system components
- Test the brakes for proper functioning
- Make sure all brakes are correctly adjusted

## Tires and Wheels

- Inspect all wheels and tires for wear and tightness
- Check air pressure in the tires
- If tires are worn, replace them

## Cab

- Check all safety and emergency equipment
- Verify the operation of the heater and heater controls, defroster and fans
- Replace any cracked or broken glass or mirrors
- Inspect the weather-stripping, which may fail in colder temperatures

## Emergency Preparedness

Even when all safety systems are in top condition, problems can still occur. Drivers should always be prepared for exposure to extreme weather conditions. Warm clothing is essential – hat, gloves, coat and boots should be worn or kept in the car. In addition to emergency equipment, additional supplies such as a working flashlight with new batteries, a first aid kit and some non-perishable food may be helpful. A CB radio or cellular phone in the vehicle is recommended.

## On the Road

Actual driving under winter conditions has special requirements of its own. Drivers need to keep the following driving tips in mind.

- Make sure you can see. Clean ice, snow and dirt off all windows, mirrors and lights
- Know the condition of the road surface: periodically touch the brakes to measure their effectiveness.
- Increase your following distance and allow more time for stopping
- Use your headlights to make sure you're seen in winter's early dusk and late dawn conditions, or any time there are adverse weather conditions
- Don't use parking lights alone while driving. Parking lights can mislead other drivers, making your vehicle appear farther away than it is

The above information is an excerpt from a Liberty Mutual Loss Prevention Note: for the full article, or more information about Liberty Mutual, contact Steve Kosydar at 630-250-7100, ext. 56599 or [Stephen.Kosydar@LibertyMutual.com](mailto:Stephen.Kosydar@LibertyMutual.com)



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