Checklist for Safe Winter Driving

Get your car serviced now

❖ Visit your mechanic for a tune-up and other routine maintenance.
❖ Have your entire vehicle checked thoroughly for any leaks, bad hoses, or other needed parts, repairs, and replacements.
❖ Have your mechanic check your battery for sufficient voltage.
❖ Have the charging system and belts inspected.
❖ If necessary, replace the battery or make system repairs.

Check your cooling system

❖ Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle and that it’s designed to withstand the winter temperatures.
❖ A 50/50 mix of coolant to water is sufficient for most regions of the country. See your vehicle owner’s manual for specific recommendations.
❖ Thoroughly check the cooling system for leaks or have your mechanic do it for you.
❖ If your system hasn’t been flushed for several years, have it done now. Over time, the rust inhibitors in antifreeze break down and become ineffective. Coolant also needs to be refreshed periodically to remove dirt and rust particles that can clog the cooling system and cause it to fail.

Fill your windshield washer reservoir

❖ Completely fill your vehicle’s reservoir before the first snow hits.
❖ Use high-quality, “no-freeze” fluid.
❖ Buy extra to keep on hand in your vehicle.

Check your windshield wipers and defrosters

❖ Make sure your windshield wipers work and replace worn blades.
❖ Check to see that your window defrosters (front and rear) work properly.

Inspect your tires

❖ Check tire pressure and make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer’s suggested PSI of air pressure, which is listed in your owner’s manual and on a label inside the driver’s door.
❖ Keep a tire pressure gauge in your vehicle and check pressure when tires are “cold” — meaning they haven’t been driven on for at least three hours.
❖ Look closely at your tread and replace tires that have uneven wear or insufficient tread. Tread should be at least 1/16 of an inch or greater on all tires.

Officer’s signature: [Signature]
Know your car

❄ Practice cold weather driving when your area gets snow — but not on a main road. Until you’ve sharpened your winter weather driving skills and know how your vehicle handles in snowy conditions, it’s best to practice in an empty parking lot in full daylight.

❄ Drive slowly. It’s harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. On the road, increase your following distance enough so that you’ll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.

❄ A word of caution about braking: Know what kind of brakes your vehicle has and how to use them properly. In general, if you have antilock brakes, apply firm pressure. If you don’t have antilock brakes, pump the brakes gently.

❄ If you find yourself in a skid, stay calm and ease your foot off the gas while carefully steering in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go. This procedure, known as “steering into the skid,” will bring the back end of your car in line with the front.

Plan your travel and route

❄ Check the weather, road conditions, and traffic; plan to leave early if necessary.

❄ Don’t rush! Allow plenty of time to get to your destination safely.

❄ Familiarize yourself with directions and maps before you go, and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time.

❄ Keep your gas tank close to full. If you get stuck in a traffic jam or in snow, you might need more fuel to get home or keep warm. Note: To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning when stuck in snow, be sure to keep your vehicle’s exhaust pipe clear of snow and ice, run your vehicle only in the open with the windows partially down, and run it only long enough to keep warm.

❄ If road conditions are hazardous, avoid driving if possible. Wait until road and weather conditions improve before venturing out in your vehicle.

Stock your vehicle

❄ Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.

❄ Abrasive material, such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.

❄ Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and markers.

❄ Blankets for protection from the cold.

❄ Cell phone, water, food, and any necessary medicine.

Learn what to do in a winter emergency

❄ Stay with your car and don’t overexert yourself.

❄ Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.

❄ To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don’t run your car for long periods with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm.

STAY SAFE!