



DRIVE TO SURVIVE WINTER DRIVING TIPS



Here at POOL/PACT we strongly advise not to drive in bad weather, though that's not always possible. Please read and remember these tips for the next time you're driving in or after a storm. We especially encourage Law Enforcement (who don't have a choice but to drive in adverse weather conditions) to read the following.

Law enforcement officers face extreme dangers when navigating streets and highways. These dangers have been well documented, but the roadways themselves pose a specific threat that's not often discussed.

Although not every collision that occurs in the winter months is caused by poor weather conditions, weather certainly plays a factor. People must adapt their driving behavior to the conditions they face on the roadways.

Snow & Ice

Although it's true that snow is slick, be aware that snow can also impair visibility on the road. Snowy conditions can cause your windows to fog up, making seeing the road very hard. Crack your windows and turn on your defroster, this should clear the windows. Snow can pile up on the windshield or cover the road. Before driving, clear off all of the snow on the windows and mirrors and be aware of the following:

- Snow and ice can be deceiving because it may not always appear slick. Always slow down well under the speed limit when driving in or after bad weather.
- Avoid making sudden turns and maneuvers; this may cause the car to lose control, make turns slowly and gently.
- Ensure the tires are in good shape. Tires should be considered for replacement when they reach approximately 6/32" of remaining tread depth to maintain in good mobility in the snow.
- Keep your gas tank full. The extra weight will provide additional traction on slick and icy roads.

Avoid abrupt stops. If your vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply firm pressure. If your vehicle does not have ABS, pump the brakes to gradually slow to a stop.

If you begin to slide in the snow, don't panic and slam on your brakes. This will likely make things worse. In a slide, you should ease off of the accelerator and gently depress the brakes while steering in the direction you need the vehicle to go.

The safest way to handle snow and ice is to not drive in it. However, for law enforcement officers, this is not an option. For obvious reasons, ice is extremely dangerous to drive on. Driving straight is just about the only thing you can do in icy conditions. Turning and stopping become an exercise in futility.

- Remain far behind other vehicles and brake very gently.
- When possible, avoid stopping on hills or icy spots. When the vehicle starts again, it might not have a chance to gain solid traction. Put the vehicle in a low gear and accelerate slowly.
- Be cautious passing snow plows or sand trucks. These drivers have very limited visibility.
- Avoid using cruise control and be especially cautious on less-traveled roads.
- Use extra caution on overpasses and bridges because they freeze before surrounding roadways.

Ice can be particularly dangerous when you don't think it's present. If temperatures are around freezing with precipitation anywhere, ice should be expected whether or not you can see it.

Law Enforcement, Remember: We can't help anyone if we don't arrive.

Members of POOL/PACT have many resources to improve their driving, including Skid Car Training and Defensive Driving, an E-Learning course. For more information contact the POOL/PACT office (775) 885-7475.

