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Winter Safety: Driving

Precautions for Avoiding Skids, Slips and Accidents

Losing control of a car is undoubtedly one of the most terrifying experiences that anyone can go through. Unfortunately, it is common when the temperatures turn cold and the roads get slick.

One of the most dangerous winter driving hazards is skidding, which at high speeds, could result in a nasty crash. To prevent an unnecessary skid, slip or accident, consider the following accident prevention techniques:

- Slow down ahead of turns and curves, as this will allow you to prepare for potential icy spots.
 - When at a curve, apply power slightly to the gas and steer steadily. Do not change directions abruptly and refrain from braking suddenly.
- Plan ahead for lane changes.
 - Check your rearview mirror and blind spot, and then signal your direction to alert other motorists.
- Look out for ice patches, piles of wet leaves and shady areas. These areas are skidding hazards.
- Anticipate stops by slowing down gradually, well ahead of intersections. These areas are generally slicker than other parts of the road because of the excess starting and stopping traffic.
- Drive at reduced speeds.
 - Slow your speed and increase your following distance behind the vehicle in front of you. This will allow for a larger buffer in case you start to slip.
- Avoid overpowering in deep snow.
- Use a light foot on the accelerator as opposed to slamming on the gas to move forward.

If You Start to Skid...

If your car starts to skid, do not panic. Steer in the direction that the vehicle is sliding until you feel the wheels regain traction. Then, slowly straighten your wheels and keep rolling.

If you need to brake before your tires regain traction, apply the brake carefully so that you do not lock your wheels.



Did you know...?

Your vehicle's braking distance directly depends on the kind of contact that the tires make with the road's slippery surface. To get the best traction, purchase snow tires (and even chains) to help keep your vehicle under control during the winter months.