

AWD is a performance feature that only enhances acceleration, not cornering or braking grip. It is a common misconception that AWD will make you safer when conditions deteriorate.

The added grip for acceleration can lead to over-confidence, which can lead to a tendency to drive faster than conditions warrant.

2. Vision and visibility are vital to safe driving. Your windshield washer nozzles should be clear and aimed at the windshield. Wiper blades should be replaced and you must remember to top up the windshield washer antifreeze. Have a good quality pair of sunglasses within easy reach to reduce road glare on wet winter roads during sunny days.

3. *Make sure all the snow is cleared off all windows, lights and the roof of your vehicle and make sure the vents (at the bottom of your windshield) are cleaned off properly or the powdered snow will find it's way to the inside of your windshield. Know how to clear fog or frost off the inside of your windows efficiently.*

4. Snow and spray off the roads can easily conceal your vehicle from view so be sure all your lights are working properly *and have them on LOW BEAM to ensure your vehicle will be more visible from both the front and behind.*

5. Make sure your battery is in good shape and clean the battery terminals and cables.
Always carry a roadside emergency kit in the vehicle.

Every driver, including truckers and those with AWD, should always remember the "Golden Rule" of driving.

When traction decreases, so should your speed.



The added resistance from a bulky winter coat is counterproductive to applying smooth steering corrections to remain in control.

Seat belts rarely fit properly over winter coats, increasing the chance of injury in a crash. Don't drive while wearing wool or cotton mitts. Use leather-palmed gloves to prevent your hands from slipping on the steering wheel.

4. Should you encounter whiteout conditions, don't continue on blindly it is very dangerous. If the vehicles in front of you disappear into a wall of blowing snow, do not follow them into it. Find a safe place and pull off the road and wait for visibility to improve.
*Don't just pull over anywhere as the chances of someone hitting you while stopped are even higher than you hitting someone else. You need you put your 4-way flashers on and continue on (slowly) until you are able to leave the road entirely (gas station, side road, driveway etc.)
Never stop on a live highway, ever, no matter what.*

5. Learn when to say "No." Check the expected weather conditions before you drive anywhere. If the meteorologists predict freezing rain, snow or bad driving conditions, stay home. No destination, not even driving into work, is worth risking your life for.

Now for your vehicle:

1. Tires are the most underrated safety feature of your vehicle as they are responsible for transmitting all your driving requirements to the road. Installing four winter tires on your vehicle is an excellent start. For maximum safety, all vehicles, including all wheel drive (AWD) should have four winter tires. Never install only two winter tires. These specialized tires retain their grip in cold temperatures when all season tires begin to lose traction. Tests show winter tires offer the driver up to 40 per cent more grip in cold weather driving.

At this time of year, it's a good idea to remind drivers with all-wheel drive or four-wheel drive that this technology is not a safety feature.



WINTER DRIVING INFORMATION

*This article was taken from the December 22, 2010 Toronto Star (Wheels.ca) with additional notes (*in italics*) from Progressive Driving School.

10 tips to make you go in the snow: Ian Law Toronto Star

With the colder temperatures of winter, it's time to prepare for the inevitable and get both you and your vehicle ready for a distinctive season of driving. The most important safety feature of any vehicle is the driver so we'll look at preparing the driver first and then talk about getting your vehicle equipped to handle the harsh conditions.

1. If you are unsure of how to drive in winter conditions or lack confidence, enroll in a winter driving school to help you learn limited traction driving skills. Road conditions can change drastically in a matter of metres and drivers must be able adapt to driving situations with limited traction. The safest winter vehicle can still easily end up in the ditch with a poorly trained driver.

2. Motorists have to focus on driving in order to see changing conditions and then process that information into prudent driving adjustments. Do not allow yourself to become distracted by cell phones, navigation aids or even your passengers. It's critical to pay attention to your driving environment.

3. One of the contributing causes of winter crashes is cold weather attire. *Try not to drive wearing winter boots or coats. Motorists wearing winter boots have often stepped on both the brake and gas pedals at the same time, causing crashes. After removing all the snow and ice from your vehicle, take off your winter coat and boots and drive wearing thinner-soled shoes. This will allow you to feel exactly how much pedal pressure you are applying and to which pedals.*



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