



State of New Mexico

New Mexico State Police

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Contact:

Lieutenant Rick Anglada

Public Information Officer

Pgr. (505) 939-6830

For Immediate Release

State Police Offer Winter Driving Tips

Santa Fe: (December 20, 2007) - State Police warn that winter hazards greatly increase the chances of becoming involved in an automobile crash. State Police offer the following winter driving tips.

- Plan ahead and leave earlier. Don't try to make up time on the road.
- When driving on icy or snow packed roads, slow to a SAFE speed. Much slower than the speed limit.
- Many drivers with front or 4wheel drive develop a false sense of security because they may have plenty of traction to keep them going. What they forget, is they have to stop at some point or may have to react to avoid a crash. On that point, you should; Allow plenty of room between you and the car in front. At least 4 times the normal distance. This will give you room and time to stop or maneuver around the hazard and avoid a crash.
- Turn on your lights for greater visibility.
- Turn off cruise control and use a slower gear. Turn off automatic overdrive.
- Stay behind the snow plow trucks and avoid passing big rigs as they cannot see you coming up behind them.
- Keep your windshield and headlights clean.
- Take extra precautions on bridges and overpasses as they tend to freeze sooner.

If you start to slide

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want to go. Towards or into the slide.
- If your car is sliding to the left, steer to the left
- If your car is sliding to the right, steer to the right
- It may take several attempts of steering left/right to bring your vehicle in line again.
- If you have standard (non-ABS) brakes, you should pump them lightly and attempt to steer out of trouble. If you cause the wheels to skid, you cannot steer. At that point release the brakes and steer, then pump the brakes again until you are out of danger.
- If you have ABS brakes, do not pump them. Apply steady pressure to them. You will feel them pulsating back on your foot. This is normal and you should be able to steer to avoid the hazard.

Tips for you car

- Always have gloves, caps, blankets, flares, flashlights, ice scraper, shovel, tire chains, jumper cables, dried fruits, nuts, hard candy and water in case you become stranded.
- Carry sand or kitty litter in your trunk to use as traction if you get stuck. Clear a path with the shovel and pour it in the path of the tires.
- Do not spin the tires; slowly ease your way forward or backward.
- Make sure your battery is maintained for those cold starts.
- If you become stranded, start your car every ten minutes to stay warm. Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of debris and snow.
- Do not leave your car unless you know where you are and help is not far.
- Call 911 and help will come as soon as possible.

Practice, patience, plan ahead and drive slow

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