

# Preparing an Emergency Kit for Your Car

Slippery or snow-covered roads, reduced visibility and bitter cold: these are all conditions that can make driving difficult and even dangerous during cold weather months. Winter also brings an increased risk of getting stuck in your car, so dress warmly before heading out.

**Follow these tips to learn about winter driving risks and prepare an emergency kit for your car.**



**Follow these tips if you are stuck in the snow:**

- \* Try to stay calm and don't go out in the cold. Stay in your car: you will avoid getting lost and your car is a safe shelter.
- \* Don't tire yourself out. Shovelling in the intense cold can be deadly.
- \* Let in fresh air by opening a window on the side sheltered from the wind.

Exercise extra caution when driving in these winter road conditions:

- \* **Blizzards:** The most dangerous of winter storms, combining falling, blowing and drifting snow, winds of at least 40 km/h, visibility less than one kilometre and temperatures below  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ . They can last from a few hours to several days.
- \* **Heavy snowfall:** Refers to snowfalls of at least 10 centimetres in 12 hours, or at least 15 centimetres in 24 hours; accumulation may be lower in temperate climates.
- \* **Freezing rain or drizzle:** This can lead to ice storms, with ice covering roads, trees, power lines, etc.
- \* **Cold snap:** Refers to temperatures that fall rapidly over a very short period of time, causing very icy conditions.
- \* **Winds:** They create the conditions associated with blizzards, and cause blowing and drifting snow, reducing visibility and causing wind chill.
- \* **Black ice:** Refers to a thin layer of ice on the road that can be difficult to see or can make the road look black and shiny. The road freezes more quickly in shaded areas, on bridges and on overpasses when it is cold. These areas remain frozen long after the sun has risen.
- \* **Slush:** Wet snow can make for slushy roads. Heavy slush can build up in the wheel wells of your vehicle and can affect your ability to steer. Large trucks and buses can blow slush and snow onto your windshield, leading to a sudden loss of visibility.

- \* Keep the engine off as much as possible. Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning and make sure the exhaust pipe is not obstructed by snow.
- \* If possible, use a candle placed inside a deep can instead of the car heater to warm up.
- \* Turn on warning lights or set up road flares to make your car visible.
- \* Turn on the ceiling light; leaving your headlights or hazard lights on for too long will drain the battery.
- \* Move your hands, feet and arms to maintain circulation. Stay awake.
- \* Keep an eye out for other cars and emergency responders. Try to keep clothing dry since wet clothing can lead to a dangerous loss of body heat.

**Items to keep in your trunk:**

- \* Sand, salt or cat litter (non-clumping)
- \* Antifreeze and windshield washer fluid
- \* Tow rope
- \* Jumper cables
- \* Fire extinguisher
- \* Warning light or road flares

**Always have winter safety and emergency equipment in your car. A basic car kit should contain the following:**

- Water—plastic bottles that won't break if the water freezes (replace them every six months)
- Food that won't spoil, such as energy bars
- Small shovel, scraper and snowbrush
- First aid kit with seatbelt cutter
- Whistle—in case you need to attract attention
- Extra clothing and shoes or boots
- Wind-up flashlight
- Roadmaps
- Candle in a deep can and matches
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Copy of your emergency plan