

SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

How to Stay Safe in Snowstorms



SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT

A Special Weather Statement means actual or expected weather conditions may cause general inconvenience or concern, but do not pose a serious threat to warrant a weather warning.

For more information on being Prepared Contact:

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Be Weather Aware!

Freezing rain, ice pellets, snowsqualls, white-outs, heavy snow and high winds can cause extensive delays and inconvenience your daily schedule, but they can also bring with them damage, power outages and even life threatening conditions. Take the time to know what to watch for, and what to do if there is a weather watch or warning issued for where you live or where you are travelling to.

Tips on Preparing for Severe Weather

1. **Don't wait for a storm to hit.** Most winter storm systems are forecast well in advance. Begin preparing ahead of time and you'll be able to react quickly when a storm arrives. Assemble a Home Emergency Survival Kit. Have it stocked and ready, and in a place where you can easily access it.
2. **Travel Safely.** Give your car a winter tune-up in mid-autumn and have your snow tires installed in early Fall. Assemble a Car Emergency Kit including basic items like high-energy snacks, a flashlight or road hazard light, new batteries, booster cables, kitty litter, a blanket, and warm gel packs.
3. **Respect Travel Advisories and Road Closure notices.** If local emergency responders are advising you to stay inside and not travel—heed the advice. Do not travel until the storm has subsided and the danger has passed. Keep your vehicle off the roadways to allow emergency responders and snow removal crews better access.

Watches and Warnings

A Watch is issued by Environment Canada as a heads-up that severe and possibly dangerous weather conditions are expected soon. For example a Winter Storm Watch is usually issued 18 to 36 hours in advance of the approaching bad weather. Environment Canada will either end the Winter Storm Watch or upgrade it to a Winter Weather Warning depending on the conditions.

A Warning is issued by Environment Canada when a combination of hazardous winter conditions are occurring or expected to develop in as little as 3 hours. You should continue to monitor local radio/television broadcasts or the Environment Canada website for update of new information.

Respect road closures



The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are solely responsible for deciding when to close or re-open a road under the Highway Traffic Act.

Do NOT go around road closure signs. Roads are closed for safety reasons.

Drivers that go around road closure signs put themselves, their passengers and first responders in danger.

Info on road closures:
Twitter: @OPP_COMM_WR

Provincial Highway conditions

Web: www.ontario.ca/511

Twitter: @511Ontario

Phone: dial 511

School Bus cancellations:

<https://cklass.ca/services/student-transportation/>

Or download the MySBI Bus Status App
(available for iPhone or Android)

Driving in Winter Weather

Winter weather can be unpredictable but some extra preparation and caution can help you stay safe.

Before you leave.

Check the weather forecast. If it looks bad, delay your trip if you can.

Clear ice and snow from your windows, lights, mirrors and roof.

Use Ontario 511 to check road conditions:

On the road.

- 1. Slow down and stay in control**
Many winter collisions happen because drivers are going too fast for road conditions. Don't use cruise control on wet, snowy or icy pavement—it reduces your reaction time and vehicle control.
- 2. Give space**
It takes longer to stop on slippery roads—make sure there's extra space between you and other vehicles.
- 3. Focus and stay alert**
Focus on the road and don't drive distracted.
Pay attention to the road surface. Black and shiny pavement could be covered in ice. Remember that shaded areas, bridges and overpasses freeze earlier than other sections of the road.
- 4. See and be seen**
Use your vehicle's full lighting system in poor visibility and whiteout conditions. If conditions become dangerous, pull over safely and wait for the weather to improve.
- 5. Be patient**
Stay well back from working snowplows and other winter maintenance vehicles. Never pass a working snowplow—it's very dangerous for you and the plow driver and could result in a severe or even fatal collision.

Winter tires

Putting winter tires on your vehicle:

- improves **traction** and control in frost, snow and icy conditions
- shortens **braking distances** by as much as 25%

Check your tires regularly for wear and pressure. Cold weather can bring down your tire pressure, and worn or damaged tires make it harder to drive safely.