



# NOAA's National Weather Service

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## Safety Talk and Tips

Eastern Region's Environmental Safety and Health Newsletter

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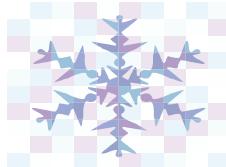
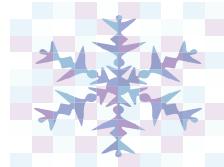
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## Winter Safety



### Driving In Snow And Ice

- If you don't have to drive--don't! But if you must, drive defensively and smart.
- Before beginning your trip, know the current road conditions.
- Be alert for potential driving hazards including downed branches, trees, electric lines and icy areas, such as shady spots and bridges.
- Leave a few minutes early to allow extra time to get to your destination.
- **Slow down!** Triple the usual distance between your car and the one ahead.
- Stay in the plowed lane; avoid driving over the ridges between the plowed areas. If you must switch lanes, slow down, signal and move over slowly.
- Don't pass a snowplow or spreader unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Don't park along the street. Snowplow drivers can't fully clear a road if cars are in their way.
- If you skid, steer into the skid. If the back of your car is skidding to the left, for example, turn the steering wheel to the left.
- Don't pump your brakes, and avoid locking them up. If your brakes lock, take your foot off the brake pedal for a moment. If your car has an Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) and you must brake, be sure to press the brake pedal and hold.
- If you're involved in a fender-bender, move the cars out of the lanes of travel.
- Keep an emergency winter driving kit with a blanket and flashlight in the car.
- While driving, keep your headlights on. Keep snow and ice off your mirrors, windows and lights.
- *As always, wear your seatbelt.*

# **Safety Tips: Winter, Your Car, and You**

Driving in the winter means snow, sleet, and ice that can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers and unforeseen dangers. To help you make it safely through winter, here are some suggestions from the National Safety Council to make sure that you and your vehicle are prepared.

## **Weather**

At any temperature, whether 20 below zero or 90 above, weather affects road and driving conditions and can pose serious problems.

## **Your Car**

Prepare your car for winter. Start with a checkup that includes:

- Checking the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Changing and adjusting the spark plugs.
- Checking the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspecting the distributor.
- Checking the battery.
- Checking the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Checking antifreeze level and the freeze line.
- Your car should have a tune-up (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts and faster response on pick-up and passing power.



## **Necessary Equipment**



An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time and you must be prepared. In addition to a tune-up, a full tank of gas, and fresh anti-freeze, you should carry the following in your trunk:

- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack
- A shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- A bag of salt or cat litter
- Tool kit

## **Essential Supplies**

Be prepared with a "survival kit" that should always remain in the car. Replenish after use.

- Working flashlight and extra batteries
- Reflective triangles and brightly-colored cloth
- Compass
- First aid kit
- Exterior windshield cleaner
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Wooden stick matches in a waterproof container
- Scissors and string/cord
- Non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy.
- If you are driving long distances under cold, snowy, and icy conditions, you should also carry supplies to keep you warm, such as heavy woolen mittens, socks, a cap, and blankets.



## **Winter Driving—*What to do if you become stranded***

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation.
- To attract attention, light two flares and place one at each end of the car a safe distance away. Hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna.
- If you are sure the car's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending upon the amount of gas in the tank.
- To protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia use the woolen items and blankets to keep warm.
- Keep at least one window open slightly. Heavy snow and ice can seal a car shut.
- Eat a hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

*courtesy National Safety Council*



## **The Well Equipped Car for Winter Driving**

- Road Flare with Matches / Warning Triangle
- Auto Distress Flag
- Cell Phone / Charging Cord
- Safety Reflector Vest
- Blanket
- First Aid Kit / CPR Mouth Piece
- Flashlight with Extra Batteries
- Fire Extinguisher
- Bottled Water
- Crackers or Cookies / Granola or Energy Bars
- Extra Fuses
- Gloves
- Rags
- Auto Manual
- Road Maps / Compass / GPS
- Hand Cleaner / Wet Naps
- Whistle
- Spending Money / Change
- Extra Pair of Walking Shoes
- Salt and/or kitty litter
- Ice scraper and brush
- Tire chains

### **Fluids:**

- Empty Gas Can
- Two Quarts of Oil
- Gallon of Antifreeze
- Brake Fluid
- Automatic Transmission Fluid

### **Tools:**

- Screwdrivers (Flat and Phillips Head)
- Pliers
- Vise Grips
- Adjustable Wrench
- Shovel
- Roll of Duct Tape
- Pocketknife / Multi-tool
- Tire Pressure Gauge
- Funnel
- Wire or Rope
- Jumper cables
- Nonflammable tire inflator

# The Environmental Corner

## Paper Recycling

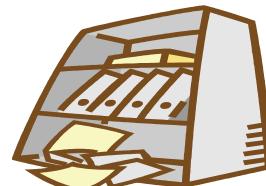
Paper is a renewable resource and recycling is increasing. By 2007, 56 percent of the paper consumed was recovered for recycling. Every percentage point gained for recycling is equivalent to approximately 1 million tons of recovered paper. Recycling paper fibers saves trees, reduces energy and water use, requires fewer chemicals, and keeps paper out of our landfills.

As NWS employees, we can help the effort to recycle paper and reduce our office's environmental footprint. We can also reduce our use of paper by printing or copying using both sides of the paper; go digital and be paperless; be selective and only printing what is needed; and don't stockpile forms, instructions, brochures and things that will go out of date. Offices can also help by purchasing products that use recycled paper. If recycled paper is not an option, use paper that is certified through global organizations such as the Forest Stewardship Council or the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. These organizations have strict standards for sustainable forestry.

*- Information in this article was obtained from [www.eponline.com](http://www.eponline.com)*

## ***WFO Baltimore-Washington Recycling Effort***

A recent office move provided the WFO with an opportunity to go through many loose-leaf binders and decide whether the office needed the information to be moved into the new facility. The result was that the paper for over 100 binders were recycled.



Additionally, any used loose-leaf notebooks in good condition were brought to "The Closet" thrift shop in Herndon, VA, for resale. The office re-stocked those notebooks in excellent condition on the shelves in the office supply room to be re-used again.

Finally, any notebooks in poor condition were recycled by cutting open the vinyl, removing the thick cardboard and putting them in the recycle bin. The remaining vinyl pieces and steel rings were put into the regular trash.

## How to Dispose of Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) Bulbs

CFLs last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs and can save 75 percent on energy usage, but what happens when they burn out?

When an incandescent light bulb burns out, you might see a flash and hear a pop. When a CFL bulb burns out, it may dim over time, produce a more dramatic pop, and emit a distinct odor or even some smoke. The plastic at the base of the CFL may turn black, but it is still safe.

Most CFLs contain between 3.5 and 5.0 milligrams of mercury that is sealed in the glass tubing. An old mercury thermometer contained about 500 milligrams of mercury. However, OSHA considers exposure to even the small amount of mercury in the CFLs as too much. No mercury is released by CFLs unless the bulb is broken. Information on how to clean up and dispose of a broken CFL can be found through [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). Look for their fact sheet on CFLs and mercury.

Because of the mercury content, CFLs must be properly disposed. Fluorescent lights are considered a "universal waste". You have two choices: 1) dispose of them in a hazardous waste landfill licensed to accept them, or 2) recycle them. Current recycling systems can capture up to 99 percent of the mercury in these bulbs and use it in new bulbs. Recycling the mercury is the best choice for the environment and the simplest solution.

# **Programmable Thermostats**

A good way to save up to a couple hundred dollars a year in heating and cooling costs at home is to use an Energy Star-qualified programmable thermostat.

## ***Winter*** thermostat programming tips:

- Keep the setting at or below 70 degrees.
- Lower the temperature several degrees below “normal” levels when you are not home and when you are sleeping.
- Use the “vacation” or “hold” features to lower the temperature 8 to 15 degrees below “normal” levels when you will be gone for an extended period of time.
- Ensure that the heating system turns on and off at the programmed temperatures. Resist the urge to drastically override the thermostat settings.



## ***Summer*** thermostat programming tips:

- Keep the setting at or above 78 degrees.
- Raise the temperature several degrees above “normal” levels when you are not home and when you are sleeping.
- Use the “vacation” or “hold” features to raise the temperature 5 to 10 degrees above “normal” levels when you will be gone for an extended period of time.
- Ensure that the cooling system turns on and off at the programmed temperatures. Resist the urge to drastically override the thermostat settings.

If you do not have a programmable thermostat you can still save money by manually adjusting your thermostat when you are not in the house and when you are sleeping.

Source: EPA and ENERGY STAR

## ***REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST!***



### **About this Newsletter**

This newsletter is brought to you on a quarterly basis by the Eastern Region Environmental Safety and Health Advisory Board to help increase awareness of the importance of the safety and health programs within the Department of Commerce, NOAA, and the National Weather Service. Your comments are welcome. Please send all comments to Kevin Murray.