

# Winter Driving Tips

If you must be on the road, use the **Four P's of Safe Winter Driving**. Road crews work hard to ensure roads are in the best possible condition; however, you must change your driving behavior during the winter months. It will help make your trip safer and help you deal with an emergency if necessary.

## Prepare your vehicle

- ▶ **Check tire tread.** Insert a Lincoln penny into the tread of each tire. If you can see the entire top of his head, your tread is less than one-sixteenth of an inch deep and should be replaced.



- ▶ **Check tire air pressure.** Each tire should be filled to the suggested PSI (pounds per square inch) of air, which is listed in your owner's manual and on a label inside the driver's door. Check when tires are "cold" - meaning they haven't been driven on for at least three hours.
- ▶ **Check fluid levels and heat.** Put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir and check your antifreeze, exhaust system, and defrosters.
- ▶ **Check gas tank.** Always keep your tank two-thirds full.
- ▶ **Assemble a disaster supply kit.** Include a first-aid kit, shovel, ice scraper, flashlight and batteries, sand or cat litter, blankets, candles and matches, water, snacks and cell phone.
- ▶ **Clean your vehicle.** Remove snow, ice, or frost from all headlights, taillights, mirrors and windows before you start to drive.

## Plan your travel

**Check weather and road conditions.** Call **511** in Kentucky or 1-866-737-3767 if calling from out-of-state. Information can also be found at <http://511.ky.gov>. Conditions are described in the following manner:



- **Wet Pavement:** The roadway is wet. Ice could form as temperatures drop.
- **Partly Covered:** The roadway is partly covered with snow, ice, or slush. Road markings may be obscured.
- **Mostly Covered:** The roadway is mostly covered with snow, ice, or slush. Road markings may be difficult to see because of packed snow and rutting conditions.
- **Completely Covered:** The roadway is completely covered with snow, ice, or slush and markings are obscured.
- **Impassable:** Roadway conditions are not suitable for travel unless required by an emergency.

## Prevent crashes

- ▶ **Drive carefully.** Allow plenty of time to get to your destination. Do not use cruise control. Remember that bridges and exit and entrance ramps can be icy when other areas are not.
- ▶ **Leave a "space cushion."** Leave enough room between you and the car in front of you because stopping in snow may require up to four times your normal stopping distance.
- ▶ **Be seen.** Dull, cloudy days will cut down on visibility so drive using low-beam headlights.
- ▶ **Steer into the skid.** Stay calm and ease your foot off the gas while carefully steering in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go.
- ▶ **Practice driving.** During daylight, rehearse maneuvers slowly on ice or snow in an empty lot.

# Protect yourself in an emergency

Kentucky has a Quick Clearance Law (KRS 189.580) meaning:

## If you are involved in a crash:

- If no one is visibly injured, move your vehicle to the shoulder or off the interstate or parkway
- Call police
- Exchange information

## If you have a disabled vehicle:

- Move vehicle off the roadway if possible and stay in the vehicle
- Turn on emergency flashers
- Tie something white or bright to your antenna or window, or raise hood, to request aid
- If unable to move the vehicle from the roadway, stand away from the vehicle. Keep arms and legs moving to keep warm.



**To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning if stuck in snow, keep the exhaust pipe clear. Run your vehicle with the windows partially down and use the heater for 10 minutes per hour.**

**For police assistance call 1-800-222-5555.**

## Need help? The SAFE Patrol is on its way!

To aid motorists, the SAFE (Safety Assistance for Freeway Emergencies) Patrol is operated on Kentucky Interstates and Parkways seven days a week.

**For SAFE Patrol Call 1-877-FOR-KYTC (1-877-367-5982).**



SAFE Patrol operators may provide gasoline, oil, add air to tires or change flat tires, provide a “jump” for dead batteries, and if necessary push vehicles off the roadway. Drivers also work to prevent traffic crashes by removing debris from the roadway and tagging abandoned cars. At the scene of a crash, drivers are trained in traffic flagging to assist in traffic management. For more information on the SAFE Patrol program, visit [http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/safe\\_patrol.asp](http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/safe_patrol.asp).

## See a road hazard? Report it!

You can now directly inform the Transportation Cabinet of highway hazards in your area. Call the Highway Hazard Hotline at **1-877-FOR-KYTC (1-877-367-5982)** with the location of the problem, name or number of the state highway, and either a milepoint or landmark. The hotline is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week by Transportation Cabinet personnel and is available throughout the year.

## How to share the road with snow plows

- ▶ Be patient and don't pass the plow. If it's safe, the plow will pull over and let you pass.
- ▶ Be aware. A snow plow may create snow clouds which cause zero visibility.
- ▶ Stay back. Give the plow room to work. It tends to speed up and slow down.



**The most heavily traveled roadways in Kentucky are the first priorities during snow removal.**

**For a snow removal priority map visit the Transportation Cabinet's website at:**

[http://transportation.ky.gov/Maintenance/Snow\\_Ice.htm](http://transportation.ky.gov/Maintenance/Snow_Ice.htm)

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet  
Office of Highway Safety



<http://highwaysafety.ky.gov>  
502-564-1438 or 1-888-374-8768