



IRM Risk & Safety Communications

December, 2011

Winter Driving Tips

- 1. CLEAR THE SNOW**—Clear all snow from your car's windows, lights, license plates and roof of your car. Also keep in mind that snow blowing from the roof and hood of your car poses a visibility hazard to the driver behind you. ** NOTE: There is a \$115 fine in Alberta for driving with an obstructed view.*
- 2. BACK OFF**—Tailgating leads to accidents and could provoke road rage. Exercise patience with the vehicle in front of you. This is good advice at any time. But during winter, it's especially critical. Give people extra lead time when roads are covered with snow, ice, slush and rain. You'll thank yourself when the car ahead suddenly spins out. ** NOTE: There is a \$172 fine if following too close results in a collision, and a \$172 fine for driving at an unreasonable rate of speed for the road conditions.*
- 3. KNOW HOW TO BRAKE**—Braking poses special challenges when roads are wet and icy. Don't take the wheel until you know how to brake in these conditions. If you go into a skid, take your foot off the gas, steer into the skid and regain control. If you have to stop right away pump your brakes - don't slam on them. If your vehicle has anti-lock braking systems (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal.
- 4. WINTERIZE YOUR VEHICLE**—In the old days, we used to change to snow tires for the winter. All-season radials have made this unnecessary in many areas. But there still are things we need to do to prepare our vehicles for the cold and icy climate. Plug in a block heater, add fuel line de-icer to the fuel tank and consider using a battery warmer. Keep your tires properly inflated (check them before you drive) so that you never feel the flat spot of frozen tread as you start off in the morning. Use chains on your tires when conditions warrant.

- 5. WINTERIZE YOURSELF**—The most important part of the vehicle to winterize is the driver. Winter weather is unpredictable. So be prepared for the unexpected. More specifically, anticipate that you might be stranded and keep these essentials in your car:

- A spare tire, properly inflated;
- A shovel and a bag of sand, salt or cat litter for traction;
- Spare warm clothing and a pair of boots; and
- Blankets, candles and food.

