

Winter Driving Tips

Ministry of Transportation
Public Outreach and Education Office

Driving requires your full attention, especially in winter. When driving in winter you must ***slow down***, ***stay alert*** and ***stay safe***.

Be Prepared – Before the Snow



Get your vehicle serviced for the season

Check the battery, headlights, cooling system, oil, wipers, and fill-up with winter-grade windshield washer fluid.

Keep extra winter-grade windshield washer fluid in your car, you can go through more fluid in the winter, and you might need to fill-up roadside.



Install your winter tires when temperatures consistently dip to 7°C and below

Winter tires will help you improve traction and control, shorten your braking distance, and increase your ability to avoid crashes.

Look for the three-peaked mountain with a snowflake symbol on the tires which mean the tire can handle snowy and slippery roads and low temperatures.



Stock your vehicle with winter essentials and a survival kit

Keep items in your car which you might need to use during a winter emergency.

- Snow brush and scraper
- Traction aid, such as sand or salt
- Flares or reflective triangles
- Basic tools or an all-in-one tool
- Blanket
- High energy food items
- Water
- Booster cables
- Flashlight & batteries (keep separate until use)
- Cell phone with charger
- Required medications
- Tire iron & wheel jack (if you carry a spare tire)



Check the road and weather conditions and plan your route

Download the free Ontario 511 mobile App today and get access to real-time highway conditions and traffic information. It is available for free on Google Play and the App Store for you to safely plan your route and receive alerts on frequently travelled routes. Or visit [Ontario.ca/511](https://ontario.ca/511)

Winter Driving Tips

Stay in Control – Safety Checklist



Clear your vehicle of all snow

Clean snow and ice off your vehicle's windshield, rear window, side windows, all lights and mirrors, wipers, hood, trunk, and rooftop before you go.



Be visible and improve your visibility

Use your vehicle's full lighting system to increase your visibility in low-light and bad weather conditions.



Turn off recirculated air and use fresh air from outside to prevent condensation and improve visibility inside your vehicle.



Buckle up for every trip

In Ontario, all motor vehicle drivers and passengers must wear a seatbelt that is securely fastened and properly adjusted. Infants and children who are too small to use a seatbelt, must be secured in an appropriate child car seat or booster seat.

Avoid dressing children in bulky clothing in child car seats as it may impact harness fit.



Drive slow, leave room and scan far ahead and around you

Many winter collisions happen because drivers are going too fast for road conditions. Steer gently on curves and in slippery conditions. Hard braking, quick acceleration and sudden gear changes can cause you to skid.

Leave extra space between you and other vehicles, It takes longer to stop on slippery roads.



Be well rested, well fed and hydrated behind the wheel

Winter driving can pose difficult driving conditions along with poor visibility so it is important to be vigilant and alert when driving.



Don't travel if you don't have to

Severe winter driving conditions may make you nervous, uncomfortable, or fearful. If you must drive, give yourself extra time for travel and, if weather is bad, wait for conditions to improve.



Never pass a working snowplow

When you see their flashing blue lights, stay back and be patient. Roads are plowed in sections, so you usually won't be stuck behind a plow for more than 20-30 minutes.

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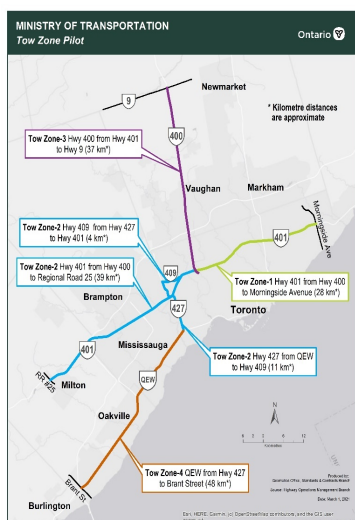
In an Emergency

Call police for help

Call 911 in an emergency or call the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 for non-emergencies. If you cannot call yourself, attach a “Call Police” sign on your window.



Call a tow truck



Call 511 for a tow only if you are in a restricted towing zone on a provincial highway

In all other areas, call a towing company directly. For more information, visit Ontario.ca/towzonepilot



Draw attention to your vehicle

Use your emergency flashers and place reflective triangles or flares around your vehicle to indicate to other drivers that you are stopped on the side of the road.



Remain in your car, don't wander

You are safest and warmest inside your vehicle. Be careful if you have to get out of your vehicle when on the shoulder of a busy road. If possible, use the door away from traffic.



To warm up

Run your motor sparingly, just long enough to warm up, or use an emergency candle. Only use the heat occasionally to stay warm, as you may need that fuel later and open windows slightly to circulate fresh air.