



Maine Farm Safety Program

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Winter Driving Safety

Driving on winter roads in Maine is a challenge. There are many hazards that cannot be avoided. Learning what to do in these situations will help to lessen your chances of having an accident.

Preparing for Winter Driving

Before taking any vehicle on the road in the winter, have it tuned up. Test the brakes, battery and exhaust system. Check fluid levels, add antifreeze and switch to winter-weight oil. Put on snow tires and carry emergency equipment. Emergency equipment should include sand or kitty litter, salt, a shovel, chains, a snow scraper/brush, booster cables, blankets and a flashlight.

Skids

The primary problem faced by winter drivers is skidding on slick or icy roadways. If your car should skid,

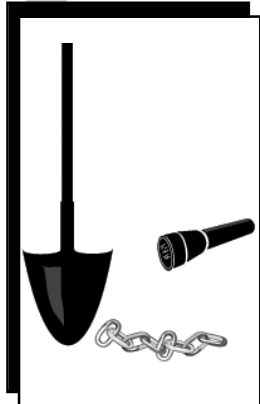
do not brake. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and turn your car in the direction that you want the front wheels to go. Use gentle, steady motions when turning the steering wheel. Turning too much or too fast can worsen the situation. If for any reason you are unable to gain control of your car, try steering into a snow bank to stop your vehicle.

Getting Stuck

If you find yourself stuck, here are some things to try. Do not continue to

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- **Pack a flashlight, blankets and a shovel. They may save a life.**
- **Keep insides and outsides of windows clear.**



spin the wheels. It will only make things worse. Pour sand, salt or gravel around the drive wheels to give them something to grab onto and improve traction. Also, shovel snow away from the wheels and out from under the car to clear a pathway.

Hazardous Driving Conditions

When driving conditions are less than ideal, it pays to be cautious. Drive slowly, test your brakes often and never tailgate. Turn on your lights, and make sure that windshields (front and rear) are

clear and that wipers and defrosters are in good working condition. Use low gears when traveling on slick surfaces (especially hills) to give added traction. Listen to weather forecasts, and if weather and visibility are hazardous, stay at home.

Many hazardous driving conditions cannot be avoided, but knowing what to do may prevent an accident and save a life.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

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Published and distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Land Grant University of the state of Maine and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Cooperative Extension and other agencies of the U.S.D.A. provide equal opportunities in programs and employment. 01/03