



The Bonner County Safety Record

All the News that is Safe to Print

Winter Safety

Bonner County auto claims and slip fall injuries historically increase in Winter. These incidents can be prevented with awareness, pre-planning and preventative actions. The infographics below discuss the topics of driving safety and slip fall prevention when walking on snowy surfaces.



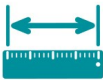
5 TIPS FOR SHARING THE ROAD WITH SNOW PLOW DRIVERS



1. Start to slow down as soon as you see the snow plow, and stay at least five car lengths (70 feet) back. Staying back will allow you enough time to react if the snow plow needs to stop quickly or avoid a road obstacle.



2. Don't stop too close. Snowplows are usually spreading deicing materials from the back of the truck. The salt, sand or cinders can damage your vehicle.



3. Give the snow plow room to work. The driver's field of vision is restricted around some parts of the plow, so they may not always be able to see you. And, be patient – they're working to help you. If you're not in a hurry, don't pass them. The road behind the snowplow will be safer to drive on anyways.



4. Take extreme caution when passing. Don't drive too close. The front plow may cross the road's centerline and shoulders. Snow plows can also create clouds of snow that can reduce or completely eliminate your visibility.



5. Permit the plow extra room in high risk areas. Areas where drivers are most at risk might include hills, curves, ramps, bridges and interchanges.

Winter Driving Safety



WINTER DRIVING CHECKLIST

- Use low gears to maintain traction, especially on steep hills. Never push the gas pedal to the floor—maintain steady pressure.
- Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks, as they have limited visibility and may not be able to see you.
- Remember that bridges and overpasses freeze up first.
- Keep your lights and your windshield clean and clear of snow.
- Turn on your headlights so your car is visible to other drivers, even in daylight.
- Reduce your speed and leave plenty of room to stop.
- Break gently to avoid skidding or sliding.
- Don't use overdrive or cruise control on icy roads.

WHAT TO DO IF...

MY REAR TIRES SKID

Take your foot off of the accelerator.

Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go.

If your rear tires are skidding to the left, steer left to regain control.

If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.

If you have anti-lock brakes, apply steady pressure.

Don't worry if you feel your anti-lock brakes pulse—this is normal.



MY FRONT TIRES SKID

Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral.

Don't try to steer immediately.

As the wheels skid and the vehicle slows, steer in the direction you want to go.

At this point, you can put the vehicle back into "drive" and gently accelerate.

If you have anti-lock brakes, apply steady pressure.

Don't worry if you feel your anti-lock brakes pulse—this is normal.





3 Tips to Avoid Slips this Winter



ONE

Wear shoes with gripping soles to provide traction. If you come across an area that you believe may be icy, tap the edge of the area with your foot to be sure.

TWO

Carrying heavy items may change your center of balance, making it more likely for you to slip. Keep your hands free and out of your pockets when walking.



THREE

When getting out of your vehicle, check to make sure there are no icy spots near your vehicle. When entering and exiting your car, use the vehicle for balance and support.

Winter safety summary:

- Install winter tires on your car
- Put a winter emergency kit in your car
- Wear the proper shoes or boots for winter
- Be aware of walking surfaces that may be slippery

HELP! I'M STUCK!



Don't spin your wheels, it will only dig you in deeper.

With a shovel, clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.

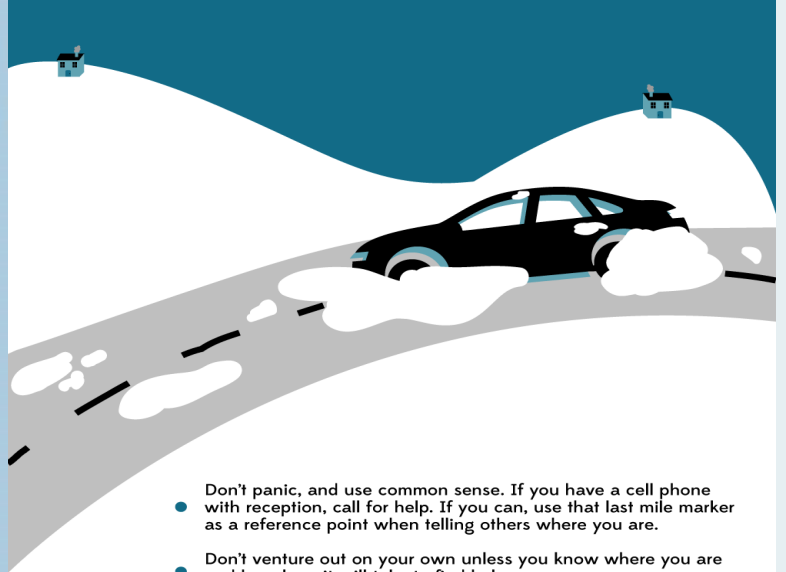
Turn your wheels from side to side to push snow out of the way.

Use a light touch on the gas to ease your car out.

Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel, or salt in the path of the wheels.

Try putting your vehicle in a lower gear—it may help.

WHAT IF I BECOME STRANDED?



- Don't panic, and use common sense. If you have a cell phone with reception, call for help. If you can, use that last mile marker as a reference point when telling others where you are.
- Don't venture out on your own unless you know where you are and how long it will take to find help.
- Light two flares and put them 5-10 feet behind and in front of your vehicle. Hang a piece of brightly colored cloth or fabric from your antenna.
- If you're sure the vehicle's exhaust pipe isn't blocked, run the engine and heater for approximately 10 minutes every hour (unless you are low on gas).
- Stay warm. Frostbite can set in quickly if you leave your vehicle or don't cover your skin.
- Keep a window open a crack. Otherwise, snow and ice may seal your vehicle shut.



Sources:
National Safety Council and DMV.org