

Winter Driving Safety Tips

Snow Plows: There are 600 snowplows clearing our 32,000 kilometres of highways in Alberta. During the first two weeks of 2015, 10 snowplows had been run into on Alberta's highways. Motorists are driving too close to snow plows and are often driving too fast for the road conditions. Most of the time this happens because drivers are 'driving blind' into a snow cloud and rear ending the plow or trying to pass the plow and ending up hitting a side mounted wing blade. People need to know that snow plows travel at about 60 kilometers per hour when cleaning our roads. They pull over at regular intervals to allow vehicles to safely pass. Drivers are being encouraged to drive accordingly when sharing the roads with our snow plows. Remember, they are out there in dangerous situations in order to make our roads safer for all of us. For more information, visit **Safer Winter Highways** online. And Alberta's Official Road report; dial 511 Or visit www.511.Alberta.ca. or @511Alberta

By visiting the www.511.Alberta site, you can see where the snowplows are working in real time. This will assist you with planning your trip. This site also identifies road conditions, construction, road closures and allow you to access road side cameras to view the current conditions.

Winter Tires: The latest generation of winter tires provide superior traction and grip. This is achieved with deep treads and sipping that can grip better on snow or ice. Currently the province of Alberta does not make it mandatory for vehicles to be equipped with winter tires during the winter months; however Alberta Transportation does recommend that vehicles are equipped with four winter or all weather tires for improved traction and control. For more information on winter tires visit vehicle.safety@gov.ab.ca

Driving – Safety Tips:

- One of the most common causes of collisions is following too close. Maintain a safe following distance. It takes far longer to stop on slippery roads.
- Reduce your speed to match road conditions. The recommended maximum speeds are designed for when there is good road and weather conditions. Motorists have a legal obligation to drive according to road conditions.
- Intersections are often very slippery. Ensure to adjust your speed accordingly do not drive too closely to the vehicle directly in front of you.
- Use your head lights and tail lights to make sure that you are visible to other drivers. Do not rely on daytime running lights. Use low beams in fog and heavy snow conditions.
- Remember that bridge decks are often icy even when the roads are not, as they are subject to greater temperature fluctuations.
- Do not use cruise control when there are potential poor road and weather conditions.
- Winter can bring many hazardous conditions. If you choose to travel be aware that the roads may not always be in good driving condition. Plan additional time for your trip.
- Clear **all** snow and ice off windows, mirrors, head lights and tail lights.
- Carry a winter road kit.

- Take your foot off the brake if your vehicle begins to skid and steer in the direction that you want to go. When wheels regain your grip, brake firmly and smoothly.
- If you are driving a rear-wheel drive vehicle, prepare to steer just enough in the opposite direction in order to prevent a counter skid.
- Keep your gas tanks over half full.
- Advise someone of your destination and expected arrival time.
- Ensure your cell phone is charged.
- For additional information on safer winter highways or other related transportation topics visit <http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/3223.htm>

Wildlife Collisions: Watch for wildlife crossing the road.

- There are more wildlife strikes in November than any other month of the year. About one in five collisions with wildlife occur in November. This equates to about 2,465 strikes in November, compared to about 1,200 strikes during other months.
- These strikes increase at this time because of mating season, availability of road side vegetation and the presence of road salt.
- Over 45 % of rural collisions involve wildlife. When a deer, elk or moose are crossing a road, there is usually more following very closely.
- Be especially careful at dusk and dawn when animals are most active.
- When you see wildlife near a road slow down and be prepared to stop.

Safe driving starts with you. Drive defensively.

For additional information on these and other traffic safety topics, contact your Regional Traffic Safety Consultant:

Gordon Elert

Under contract with Alberta Transportation – Office of Traffic Safety

Grande Prairie

gordon.ellert@gov.ab.ca