

Are you Prepared for Winter Driving?

Winter storms and weather have begun moving across Colorado in recent weeks, bringing high winds, snow and hazardous travel conditions to roads across Colorado. Winter weather can be hazardous, and driving and road conditions can change quickly. A couple of years ago, a man and his dog in Oregon spent five days trapped in his car when it went off the road in a snow storm. He survived by turning his car on occasionally for warmth and by eating Taco Bell sauce packets and drinking melted snow. Relying on having enough gas, a love of fast food, and a tendency not to clean out your vehicle is not a good survival strategy.

The Colorado Department of Transportation recommends people traveling in cold weather stock their vehicles with a winter weather survival kit that includes the following.

- Flares/reflectors to signal for help and warn other motorists
- Sturdy scraper/snow brush/snow shovel to clear snow
- Battery- or crank-powered radio to listen to emergency broadcasts
- Flashlight with extra batteries or crank-powered flashlight
- Survival blanket or sleeping bag
- Chemical hand warmers
- Extra set of clothes, including coat, hat, mittens, boots, etc.
- Gallon jug of water and nonperishable food
- First aid kit and essential medications
- Tire chains and tow strap
- Non-clumping kitty litter/sand for traction
- Jumper cables
- Extra cloth or paper towels for cleanup if necessary
- Deck of cards or board games for entertainment

IF YOU ARE STRANDED IN YOUR VEHICLE

If you find yourself stranded in your vehicle during a snowstorm, immediately check that the tailpipe is clear of snow. A blocked tailpipe can lead to a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide in the passenger compartment. According to U.S. Airforce Staff Sergeant Charles Dornford, who teaches cold weather survival strategies to Department of Defense personnel in Arctic Alaska, taking the following steps if you become stranded in winter weather could save your life.

- Keep the vehicle's tailpipe clear.
- Stay in your car unless you see a building nearby.
- Turn the car off to conserve gas, and only turn it back on occasionally to stay warm.
- Check the tailpipe every time you turn the heater on.
- Do exercises in the car, such as flutter kicks, to stay warm.
- Stay hydrated. Melt snow if necessary. The more hydrated you are, the warmer you will stay.
- Keep your seat belt on. Even if you are pulled over, another vehicle may still hit yours.
- Turn on your hazard lights or use roadside flares to alert other drivers or rescuers of your location.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

If possible, avoid driving in bad weather; however, if you must be out, ensure that you are prepared in case winter weather means spending a night in your vehicle. Keep an emergency winter survival kit in your vehicle and know the steps to take if stranded. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861 0507.