

SAFETY MEMO

February 22nd, 2021 – Winter Weather Driving



Did you know?

Driving in Severe Weather

Severe weather greatly increases the chances of accidents on the road. Winter storms and slick road conditions are a factor of almost half a million crashes and account for nearly 2,000 road fatalities every winter.

Additional preparations can help make travelling safer in winter conditions for all motorists on the road. OSHA recommends remembering the three P's of Safe Winter Driving:

- **Prepare** for the trip.
- **Protect** yourself.
- **Prevent** crashes on the road.

How to prepare properly for the trip?

- **Maintain your vehicle:** check your battery, tire tread and windshield wipers are working properly, and fill up the antifreeze tank.
- **Keep a safety kit on hand:** flashlights, jumper cables, warning devices should be kept in the vehicle in case of emergency.

According to CAA Quebec, your emergency kit needs extra equipment during winter: shovel, snowbrush, scraper and winter windshield wiper fluid. All these items should be added to those you keep in your vehicle for the rest of the year. It is also recommended to keep abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter in case the vehicle is stuck in the snow.

- **Plan your route:** allow plenty of time and check the weather in areas in which you will be traveling through. Plan your departure to avoid severe weather.
- If you have an electric car, CAA Quebec reminds electric motorists that in winter, their range should be double their daily driving needs.



Figure 1: Cars at an intersection during winter.

Protect yourself during the trip

- Avoid looking at your phone and avoid distractions.
- Keep children under the age of 12 years in the back seat. Also, never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag.

Accident prevention

- Slow down. Driving faster makes it more difficult to stop in wet and cold weather conditions. If you suspect that the road might be covered in ice, even though it is invisible to the eye, ease up on the accelerator.
- Increase distance. In normal driving conditions, it is recommended you keep one car length between you and another vehicle for every 10 miles per hour of speed. The distance should be increased in case of sliding during inclement weather conditions.
- Avoid driving fatigue. Get plenty of rest before a trip. For long drives, stop every 3 hours to stretch. Rotate drivers if possible.

