



David A. Clarke Jr.
Sheriff

Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office ***Travel Advisory***

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Travel Advisory for Motorists Life-threatening Cold Weather Conditions

Milwaukee, WI – Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. issued a weather alert for motorists today. Vehicles are not always reliable in the severe cold weather expected over the next week. Temperatures are expected to fall to about -25 with wind chills at -30 to -40, creating potentially life-threatening conditions.

Have an emergency kit in your vehicle to help survive if your car becomes disabled. Include blankets, extra clothing (fleece hats, gloves, scarves), folding shovel, candles, waterproof matches, flashlight with batteries, hand warmer packets, water bottles, nutritious snack bars and nuts.

Prepare ahead of any travel by keeping your gas tank full and have the vehicle's fluid levels checked.

Read additional safety guidelines from the following AAA and State of Wisconsin resources:

AAA recommends the following winter driving tips: <http://exchange.aaa.com/safety/roadway-safety/winter-driving-tips/>

- Avoid driving while you're fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
- Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated.
- Never mix radial tires with other tire types.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up.
- If possible, avoid using your parking brake in cold, rainy and snowy weather.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
- Always look and steer where you want to go.
- Use your seat belt every time you get into your vehicle.

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Tips for long-distance winter trips:

- Watch weather reports prior to a long-distance drive or before driving in isolated areas. Delay trips when especially bad weather is expected. If you must leave, let others know your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.
- Always make sure your vehicle is in peak operating condition by having it inspected by a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility.
- Keep at least half a tank of gasoline in your vehicle at all times.
- Pack a cellular telephone with your local AAA's telephone number, plus blankets, gloves, hats, food, water and any needed medication in your vehicle.
- If you become snowbound, stay with your vehicle. It provides temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to locate you. Don't try to walk in a severe storm. It's easy to lose sight of your vehicle in blowing snow and become lost.
- Don't overexert yourself if you try to push or dig your vehicle out of the snow.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna or place a cloth at the top of a rolled up window to signal distress. At night, keep the dome light on if possible. It only uses a small amount of electricity and will make it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe isn't clogged with snow, ice or mud. A blocked exhaust could cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment with the engine running.
- Use whatever is available to insulate your body from the cold. This could include floor mats, newspapers or paper maps.
- If possible run the engine and heater just long enough to remove the chill and to conserve gasoline.

Tips for driving in the snow:

- Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry. And take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- Drive slowly. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads. Accelerating, stopping, turning – nothing happens as quickly as on dry pavement. Give yourself time to maneuver by driving slowly.
- The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.
- Know your brakes. Whether you have antilock brakes or not, the best way to stop is threshold breaking. Keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
- Don't stop if you can avoid it. There's a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.
- Don't power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed down hill as slowly as possible.

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- Don't stop going up a hill. There's nothing worse than trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.
- Stay home. If you really don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can. Don't tempt fate: If you don't have somewhere you have to be, watch the snow from indoors.

The Departments of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Health Services (DHS) and ReadyWisconsin are teaming up to warn people about the upcoming bitter weather and precautions you and your family should take.

Forecast – The National Weather Service says cold air will begin pouring into Wisconsin Saturday night and into Sunday. The coldest stretch will be Sunday night through Tuesday. Meteorologists are predicting lows Sunday night of -10 to -25 with wind chills at -30 to -40. Monday, highs will reach only -5 to -15 with wind chills remaining in the -30 to -40 danger zone.

Health Risks – With these bitter temperatures, beware of hypothermia and frostbite.

Frostbite can occur on exposed skin in less than 10 minutes. Symptoms include a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, ear tips and tip of the nose. Limit your time outside. If you see these signs, seek medical care immediately!

Signs of hypothermia include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness in adults and children. In infants, symptoms can include bright red or cold skin and very low energy. If you notice anyone exhibiting any of the symptoms of hypothermia, seek medical care immediately!

Carbon Monoxide Danger - Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States. Breathing carbon monoxide displaces the oxygen in the blood and can cause death within minutes at high levels. Symptoms of overexposure to carbon monoxide are often mistaken for the flu and include headaches, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath/chest pain, nausea/vomiting, and confusion. If you or someone you know experience any of these symptoms, or your carbon monoxide detector sounds an alarm, head outside immediately for fresh air and call 911.

Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home or an unventilated garage. Any heating system that burns fuel will produce carbon monoxide. Never run a car in an enclosed space. If a vehicle is running, you must have a door open to the outside. Generators should be run a safe distance from the home. Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector.

Pet Precautions - While our pets might seem to have built-in, warm winter coats, they too are sensitive to the elements. It is recommended to bring them indoors during this bitter weather. Dogs and cats can get frost bitten ears, nose and feet if left outside during bitter cold weather. Chemicals used to melt snow and ice can also irritate pets' paws - be sure to keep anti-freeze, salt and other poisons away from pets.

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Cats sometimes crawl under cars and into the engine compartment, seeking shelter and warmth. Bang on the hood before starting the car on cold days to startle sleeping animals. And remember, just as cars heat to oven temperature in summer, they can be equally deadly in winter when they turn into freezers. Don't leave your pet alone in a vehicle. It may freeze to death.

On the road - If you are traveling make sure you have a winter emergency kit in your vehicle. Items to include in the kit are candles and matches, a flashlight, pocket knife, snacks, a cell phone adapter, a blanket and extra clothing. Also check with 511WI for road conditions. (<http://www.511wi.gov/Web/>).

For additional information go to:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov>

<http://datcp.wi.gov/>

<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>

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