



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **State Officials Offer Safety Tips and Information for Driving in Extreme Winter Weather Conditions**

**COLUMBUS, OH** – The National Weather Service has issued wind chill advisories for the entire state, forecasting temperatures well below zero to single digits above, and feeling like -10°F to -20°F through the weekend. The Ohio Emergency Management Agency urges residents to be safe and cautious when outside and while driving in extreme winter weather conditions.

Dress warm and dress in layers. Wear a coat or jacket, hat, scarf, gloves, and sturdy shoes or boots to avoid frostbite. Exposed skin can become frostbitten in only 10 minutes when temperatures are dangerously cold.

State officials offer the following safety tips when driving in severe winter weather:

- Pay attention to weather and traffic reports on the radio. Allow extra travel time for inclement weather and/or traffic delays.
- In frigid temperatures, allow the vehicle to adequately warm up before driving.
- Clear the vehicle's windows, headlights, tail and brake lights of snow and ice.
- Leave ample stopping time between you and the driver in front of you. Braking distance can be up to nine times greater on snowy, icy surfaces than on dry roads.
- Drive slowly, and be cautious on bridges and overpasses – they often are the first to freeze over.
- On snowy roadways, accelerate and brake slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is best for regaining traction and avoiding skids.
- If your vehicle is equipped with an anti-lock braking system (ABS), and you get into a skid, remember S.S.S.
  - **Stomp** on the brakes. Firmly depress the brake pedal
  - **Stay** on the brakes. Do not pump the brakes
  - **Steer** where you want the vehicle to go
- If your vehicle does not have ABS, gently pump the brakes to stop the vehicle. You need to maintain full control of the vehicle. Refer to the operating manual for proper methods to correct skids.
- During inclement weather, call and tell those at your destination your departure time, your travel route, and your anticipated arrival time. Ensure they have your cell phone number, as well.
- If you don't really have to go out, stay home. Wait until weather and road conditions improve.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) suggests if you're on the road and become stranded, it is best to remain in the vehicle. If nothing else, you are guaranteed shelter. Other helpful tips from OCSWA include:

- Tie a bright colored cloth (handkerchief, towel, etc.) to the vehicle's antenna, driver door handle or outside mirror.

- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow. Poisonous gases can filter into the vehicle if the pipe is clogged.
- Run the engine and heater no more than 10 minutes every hour, leaving a downwind window slightly open for ventilation while the engine is running.
- Light a flare or turn on a flashlight to let others know you're stranded in the vehicle.
- Use floor mats, seat covers and blankets for added warmth. If you must leave your vehicle during a severe snow storm or blizzard, secure a line of rope or cord to yourself and the vehicle to avoid becoming lost or disoriented.
- Remain calm. Chances for rescue are better if you remain calm and in your vehicle.
- Keep bottled water in your emergency kit or vehicle. Never eat snow. It will chill you and lower your body temperature. Other items to have in your vehicle's emergency kit include:
  - Blankets or sleeping bag
  - Flashlight or battery-powered lantern with extra batteries
  - Booster (jumper) cables
  - Emergency flares
  - Extra clothing such as jackets, boots, hats and gloves
  - Small shovel and rope to use as a life line
  - Bottled water or juice, nonperishable high-energy snack food
  - First-aid kit and necessary medications
  - Sand or non-clumping (clay) cat litter for tire traction if your vehicle gets stuck in the snow or ice
  - Cell phone, car charger or extra (charged) phone battery

For additional information on winter safety and preparedness, visit ReadyOhio at [www.ready.ohio.gov](http://www.ready.ohio.gov) and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

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