



Stranded Motorist Winter Survival Tips

Many hazards come with winter driving, but the possibility of being stranded may be one of the worst. If you get stranded while driving, here are some tips geared at helping you survive.

- ☑ **Plan Your Route:** Don't use back roads to avoid traffic or save time. Take heavily traveled routes where more people can spot you. Also, main roads are the first areas that rescue workers will reach in emergencies. If you must drive, travel during the day and don't travel alone. Tell family or friends where you are going, the route you will take and when you expect to arrive.
- ☑ **Stay With Your Vehicle:** While it will get cold, your vehicle is your best protection against wind and exposure. Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you. Abandon your car only as a last resort. A single person walking through the snow is much harder to find than a stranded vehicle.
- ☑ **Prepare Your Vehicle:** Make sure your vehicle is winterized and in good driving condition. Keep your gas tank full. This will keep the fuel line from freezing and allow you to run the engine for heat for a longer time.
- ☑ **Pack a Winter Survival Kit:** The kit should contain non-perishable food, water, warm clothes, blankets, tea light candles (for warmth), waterproof matches, flares, tools or a multi-function knife, a small mirror (for signaling), brightly colored cloth/plastic (for visibility), tow chain/strap and a small pot for melting snow (to drink).
- ☑ **Use the Heater Sparingly:** Running your engine and heater for ten minutes every hour is enough to keep you warm while also conserving fuel. While the engine is running, slightly open a downwind window for fresh air. Make sure to keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ☑ **Keeping Moving:** At least once an hour, vigorously move your arms, hands, legs, feet and toes to improve circulation and keep warm. **Important:** Don't exercise enough to get hot or sweaty. Wet clothes lose insulation value, making you susceptible to hypothermia. Also, avoid use of cigarettes or alcohol as these will reduce your ability to stay warm.
- ☑ **Stay Hydrated:** The keys to winter survival are to stay dry, hydrated and warm. Drink fluids sparingly over time to avoid dehydration. Don't put snow in your mouth as a source of liquid, always melt it first. "Eating" snow will lower your body temperature, increasing your risk of hypothermia.
- ☑ **Make Your Vehicle Easy to Find:** Tie a piece of brightly colored cloth or plastic to your antenna or hang it out of a window. When running the engine at night, turn on interior lights if you hear rescuers nearby. Rescuers can see a small glow at a considerable distance. To reduce battery drain, use emergency flashers only if you hear approaching vehicles. If the snow has stopped falling, open the hood of the car as a distress signal. Keep the roof of your car free of snow so it's visible from the air.
- ☑ **Communicate:** Make sure that your cell phone is fully charged. Call 911 and describe your location as precisely as possible. Keep calls brief to save your battery. Sending text messages for help has the best chance of getting through while minimizing battery loss.

Don't expect to be comfortable; the goal is to endure until you're found. Remember that the keys to survival are to remain calm and patient, and to be prepared.

Visit [Allstate Be Aware and Prepare](#) and the [Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety](#) for more, helpful information.