



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE AGENCIES: SHIFT INTO WINTER DRIVING MODE

ST. PAUL — With snowfall predicted across Minnesota, the Departments of Public Safety (DPS) and Transportation (MnDOT) urge motorists adapt driving skills to winter road conditions — and be buckled, patient and attentive behind the wheel. During 2005–2007 in Minnesota, officers reported snowy or icy road conditions in nearly 41,000 crashes that resulted in 159 traffic deaths and more than 13,000 injuries.

Officials advise motorists to re-learn how their vehicle responds on snow or ice by testing brakes to get a feel for the road. Officials also stress that motorists should drive at safe speeds according to road conditions and keep a safe stopping distance between vehicles. Motorists should use extra precautions when driving around snowplows by keeping at least five car-lengths between their vehicles and plows.

For weather-related road condition information call 5-1-1 or visit www.511mn.org.

Parents of teen drivers should make sure new motorists experience snow and ice driving in a safe environment, such as an empty parking lot.

DPS and MnDOT recommend the following for safe winter driving:

- Always use seat belts.
- Adjust speed to road and weather conditions — lower speeds minimize crashes.
- Keep a safe stopping distance between vehicles, and leave extra room between your vehicle and snow plows or other removal equipment.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly on icy/snow-covered roads to retrain traction and avoid skids.
- Do not use cruise-control.
- Do not “power up” hills which may cause wheels to spin. Build momentum before reaching a hill and don’t stop while traveling uphill. Reduce speed going downhill.
- Know your brakes — keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of the foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
- Give yourself plenty of travel time — don’t put your schedule before safety.
- Clear snow and ice from vehicle windows, hood, headlights, brake lights and directional signals.
- Headlights must be turned on when it is snowing or sleeting.

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