

NDOT helping make roads safer for winter travel

Motorists can drive a little safer on winter roads this season with safe driving tips and new snow removal technology from the Nevada Department of Transportation in association with the Nevada Highway Patrol.

Last winter, there were three fatalities statewide attributable to unsafe driving behaviors in snow, ice and other wet conditions, such as driving too fast for conditions, following too closely, and failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting.

“There are too many crashes every winter from drivers not slowing down in winter conditions,” NHP Trooper Barb Stapleton explained in a press release. “Slowing down and wearing seatbelts is always important. And, in winter weather, drivers should avoid quick stops and turns and turn off the cruise control to help avoid skidding.”



Slowing down can help drivers avoid sliding off the road. Photos/LTN file

NDOT Director Rudy Malfabon said, “This year, NDOT will be using a tow plow and automatic bridge anti-icers as an even

more efficient way to clear the road.”

Automatic bridge anti-icers have been put in place on bridges on Interstate 580 between Reno and Carson City. During inclement weather, an anti-icing solution automatically sprays on the bridges to help delay and prevent ice.

Beginning in 2013, motorists will also see a tow plow being used to remove snow on Interstates 80 and 580 in the Reno area. The tow plow is a second, steerable snowplow blade towed like a trailer behind a traditional snowplow. The tow plow swings out to the lane next to the lead snowplow to clear a second lane of snow. By using one plow to clear snow from two lanes, the tow plow increases mobility and safety for all drivers and leads to a \$78 per hour estimated cost savings compared to operating costs of a single plow.

Updated state road conditions, from winter road closures to traffic and road incident information, are available by dialing 51” or clicking on the Nevada icon on the home page of Lake Tahoe News.

Winter driving tips:

- Only travel in winter weather when necessary, leave enough time to safely reach your destination and plan your route to avoid snowy/icy areas and steep hills.
- Before leaving home, check weather and road conditions.
- Share your travel itinerary so others know when to expect you.
- Remove snow and ice from all vehicle windows, mirrors, lights, turn signals and license plates.
- Buckle up.
- Turn on headlights to see and be seen.

- Turn off cruise control.
- Avoid quick starts, stops and fast turns. Accelerate, brake and steer smoothly and gradually.
- Reduce speed. Speed limits are based on normal road and weather conditions, not winter road conditions.
- Do not slam on brakes. Apply steady pressure on ABS-equipped vehicles and pump the brakes if necessary on non-ABS vehicles.
- Always comply with all posted chain requirements.
- If your vehicle has snow tires, install and use them between Oct. 1 and April 30.
- Keep additional distance from other vehicles.
- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment.
- Do not pass without good distance and sight clearance.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas- they may freeze first.
- Maintain a high fuel level.
- If vehicle begins to skid, steer in direction of slide and slowly remove foot from accelerator.
- Be aware of black ice.
- If parked or stuck in snow, leave window slightly cracked for ventilation and make sure vehicle exhaust system is clear of snow.

Carry with you:

- Tire chains/tow strap
- Flashlight

- Spare batteries
- Ice scraper
- Cell phone for emergency communication only
- Snow shovel
- Flares
- Jumper cables
- Small bag of sand for wheel traction
- Extra winter clothes – coat, gloves, socks
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Non-perishable food, water
- First aid supplies, prescription medication
- Battery-operated radio
- Candles, matches or lighter
- State map for navigation in event of winter detour.