

Winter driving tips as storm approaches

Caltrans encourages motorists to be prepared for winter driving conditions, particularly in the snowy Sierra, with the first big winter storm expected to hit Friday and continue into the weekend.

Here are some winter driving tips:

- Check your antifreeze level and make sure it is properly filled and formulated for winter temperatures.
- Check your tire pressure and tread.
- Replace the wiper blades and fill the windshield wiper fluid reservoir; be sure to use a winter formula to help de-ice windshields.
- Carry tire chains that are the correct size for your tires, in good working order and practice installing the chains before needing to use them.
- Have a full tank of fuel before traveling.
- Have blankets, extra clothing, food and water, towels, a shovel, a flashlight, an ice scraper, a small bag of sand or kitty litter and road flares.
- When traveling with children, carry small activity packs for them to help prevent driver distractions.
- Have a fully charged cell phone before leaving and carry a car charger.
- Reduce speeds during winter weather and allow for additional stopping time.
- 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.
- Keep additional distance from other vehicles.
- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment and don't crowd the plow. Only pass snow removal vehicles when a safe, legal passing area is available and sight distance is good.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas; they may freeze first.
- If your vehicle begins to skid, steer in the direction of slide and slowly remove your foot from accelerator.
- Understand that winter weather and road conditions can change rapidly and allow for extra travel time.
- Make sure you share the route you intend to take with friends or family.