

## Routt County Office of Emergency Management



# Emergency Preparedness & Response News



Let's face it — unless you're a Winter Olympics athlete, speed, snow and ice don't mix.

The following simple word-math hybrid equations will help explain this:

Dry road vs. wet road = different  
Dry road vs. icy or snowy road = VERY different

We'll assume that most of the time you drive on dry roads — fair enough? Okay, and most of the time, you're a pretty good driver, right? You make left and right turns, occasionally use your turn signal, stop behind the car in front of you. Good.

Your vehicle will not perform or react the same way on a wet, icy or snowy road as it does on all those days you drive on dry roads.

That's that? You have 4-wheel drive? Well, that will help you with things like accelerating, but not slowing down; you still need extra distance to stop, slower speed to round corners, and more time to get where you need to go.

The main things to remember is: WHEN THERE'S ICE AND SNOW, TAKE IT SLOW!



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## Don't Crowd the Plow

Cleaning the roads... snowplows do great things! Occasionally they'll do kind of annoying things like shoving all that icy, wet, chunky snow from the street right onto your driveway apron that you just finished shoveling. But that's the exception, not the rule, right?

These beasts of the road need room to do their work properly. While you may think they're in your way, you are probably in theirs. And they're bigger, and they're throwing snow and debris, so you need to back off! Don't crowd the plow.

- Snowplows travel below the posted speed limit. Begin slowing down as soon as you see a snowplow.
- Stay well behind the snowplow. Don't tailgate and try not to pass. Operators cannot see directly behind their trucks. If you must pass, use extreme caution and beware of the snow cloud!
- Do not pass in a snow cloud or until you can be sure the road ahead is clear of vehicles and snowdrifts.
- Snowplows and traffic cause light snow to swirl. It can become difficult or impossible to see the plow and the roadway, and also for the plow operator to see you.



- Be patient!
- Allow plenty of space to slow down.
- When there's ice and snow, take it slow.
- Give snowplows room to work—they are wide and can cross the centerline or shoulder.
- Never pass a snowplow on the right!! Some snowplows are equipped with a wing plow—an eight-foot extension on the right side of the truck.
- Keep back at least 200 feet. Plows aren't just removing snow. They may also be spreading sand or deicer on roads. Maintain a safe distance behind snowplows to avoid being sprayed with deicing material. Reduce speed when meeting a plow and move as far right as you safely can to prevent windshield damage.
- Snowplows frequently stop and back up, so give them plenty of room! (Don't crowd the plow!)

**Snowplows are on the road for your safety!**

# Emergency Preparedness & Response News

## Assembling a Winter Driving Safety Kit—Lists and Tips

Winter driving demands our utmost attention and respect. Even if the conditions and weather forecast are favorable, it can all go very wrong in the blink of an eye. **YOU MUST BE PREPARED!**

A small patch of black ice, a brief white-out, a moment of inattention and you can find yourself stuck or off the road and waiting for assistance. Many people are under the mistaken impression this happens only during raging winter storms or when traveling a long distance from civilization – but that is often not the case.

As with everything else in life, preparation makes a difference. In this case it can mean the difference between survival and the unacceptable alternative. A few minutes gathering and preparing a winter survival kit is all it takes. Find one of those old backpacks lying around the house or apartment or buy a cheap one if necessary. Fill it with the following and you have a 'Grab-and-Go' survival kit!

You only have to do it once, you can do it as a favor or present for a loved one and it is completely portable so if you are traveling with someone else, take it along.

### Emergency Gear

The complete itemized list appears below, along with a few suggestions for what to do should you be forced to wait for more than a few hours for assistance. But first let's break our Grab-n-Go kit into two sections: emergency gear and comfort and safety — for the short- or long-term.



You'll find most of these items around the house, then pick up a few others during your regular grocery run and complete the list with a visit to an outdoor adventure or camping shop.

These are the items that might help get you out of a situation and/or attract assistance. Every vehicle that travels more than a few miles in a Colorado winter should have a long-handled snow brush, a set of jumper cables, a tow rope or strap, and a proper first-aid kit.

But our Grab-n-Go kit also includes a flashlight and extra batteries, better yet one with hand crank recharging abilities, a shovel, a cell phone and 12-volt charging cord will be useful in some, but not all occasions or locations.



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A bag of kitty litter can be an excellent way to create some traction on ice; and if you're stuck for awhile, absorb moisture and help eliminate odors resulting from "nature calls." Make up a basic tool kit consisting of a hammer, pliers, adjustable wrench, multi-purpose screwdriver, knife and roll of duct tape.

You want to draw attention to yourself and location, so take a couple of flares, a can of fluorescent paint or roll of bright-colored tape to help attract attention from air search and rescue teams. A small container of methyl hydrate (lock de-icer) can also be used to remove ice from metal or hard-plastic surfaces.

## Staying Warm and Dry

Extra underwear and socks (old ones you were going to throw out), a couple of long-sleeve T-shirts (great for wrapping some of the solid objects in the kit to prevent rattling), boots, mitts, waterproof jacket or poncho, hat with ear warmers (fashion is not an issue), and a blanket. Should it be necessary to settle in for a longer duration, you will appreciate having two (2) deep metal cans... one in which to melt snow, heat water, and make soup; and a second to hold a candle to generate warmth.



A couple of big fat candles will be your best buddies as a source for light, heat, and to melt snow for drinking water. Of course you need to light them, so include a batch of strike-anywhere matches in a waterproof container.

A couple of energy bars, some beef or chicken jerky, and instant soup mix will help tide you over until you get to something a bit more substantial. You could pack a couple of bottles of water, but

be sure to provide room for expansion when they freeze. A roll of toilet paper will serve many purposes other than the obvious one.

And lastly, a few items we'll classify as miscellaneous: games and toys, if you have children; a pen (pencil is better in extreme cold) and a notepad; a small amount of money, including change in case you have access to a vending machine or pay phone; a map of the area where you are traveling (which will help you orient the location of noises and direction from which assistance will come); and a sports whistle to attract attention.

Throw the whole thing into the backpack or bag and into the trunk or cargo compartment. Hold it in place with a bungee cord — which may be useful for other purposes. Hopefully you will never need it, but if you do this slight extra effort and expenditure will be more than appreciated — it could save your life.



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## Grab & Go Kit Essentials

- Basic tool kit
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Bottled water
- Candles and two deep cans
- Cell phone with 12-volt charging cable
- Duct tape
- First aid kit
- Flares, neon distress signs, fluorescent paint or tape
- Flashlight—extra batteries or hand-crank charger
- Games and toys if you have children
- Kitty litter
- Long-handled ice-scraper and brush
- Long-sleeve T-shirts
- Map
- Methyl hydrate (lock de-icer)
- Money, including change
- Multi-purpose tool, including knife
- Non-perishable food and snacks — energy bars, jerky, soup mix
- Pen (or pencil) and notepad
- Strike-anywhere matches in waterproof container
- Toilet paper
- Tow chain or strap
- Underwear and socks
- Waterproof jacket or poncho
- Whistle

