

Be prepared, plan ahead ? Province reminding drivers to stay safe

The Provincial government is reminding drivers to keep themselves from danger this winter with a few tips that will help both experienced and new drivers reach their destinations safely.

Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca joined various road safety partners last week in reminding everyone how to stay safe during the winter.

Plan ahead

Plan your route and check weather and road conditions before you head out. Give yourself extra time for travel or wait until conditions improve. Call 5-1-1 or visit ontario.ca/511 for current highway conditions.

Be prepared

Get your vehicle ready with a maintenance check-up. Have a winter driving survival kit in your vehicle and always be sure to clear all snow and ice from all windows, mirrors, headlights and rear lights.

Drive safe

Stay alert, avoid distractions, slow down and stay in control. Adjust your driving to current road and weather conditions. Keep a safe following distance between you and the vehicle ahead. If you see a working snow plow, stay back and give it plenty of room to do its job.

About 1,000 snowplows and salt/sand spreaders are used to fight winter storms across 16,900 kilometres of provincial highways. Snow plows begin working once two centimetres of snow has accumulated on the highway ? stay back when you see a snow plow to let it do its job. Sand is used when salt becomes ineffective for melting ice and snow at temperatures below minus 12°C.

Highways may close during severe weather ? check the forecast before you travel.

Winter tires provide better traction, braking and handling during cold, snowy and icy conditions.

“Our top priority is to keep Ontario's highways safe,” Del Duca said. “Our winter maintenance standards are among the best in North America and I urge all drivers to do their part ? prepare your vehicle for winter driving hazards, be aware of road and weather conditions, slow down and stay in control.”

“Ontario's winters can be severe and unpredictable, making it challenging for drivers,” commented OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, provincial commander of traffic safety and operational support. “Make sure you and your vehicle are prepared for changing weather and road conditions. Ensure safe winter driving by staying alert, slowing down, staying in control and using your full set of headlights every time you head out.”

“The key to safe winter driving is to plan ahead and be prepared,” Ontario Safety League President and CEO Brian Patterson observed. “To ensure the safety of you and your family, make your vehicle winter ready ? pack a survival kit, plan your routes and always drive according to changing weather conditions.”