

Winter Driving & Car Maintenance Tips

Many Detroit Mercy Dental students are new to driving in winter weather or car ownership. The following resources and tips were developed by the Office of Student Services to serve as a general guide to winter driving.

Keep the following in your car during the winter:

- Blanket or extra coat
- Windshield wiper fluid
- Gloves
- Car phone charger
- Spare tire
- Ice scraper/snow brush
- Other helpful items: Portable tire inflator, winter boots and/or warm socks, snow shovel

Snow & Ice

- Get a **quality** ice scraper. Less expensive scrapers break easily. We recommend spending \$15-\$20 for a scraper that will last years. They can be found at gas stations and hardware stores.
- Your entire car needs to be clear of snow and ice before you begin driving, not just the windshield. Remember to kick off the snow that accumulates near your tires and check that side mirrors are cleared.
- When you know it is going to snow, either overnight or while at school, flip your windshield wipers straight up. This is a convenient way to keep them clean so you don't have to clean them along with the rest of your car.
- It is helpful to turn on defrosters before or while clearing your car of snow and ice.

Other Tips

- Keep your gas tank at least half full when temperatures dip below freezing to keep the tank itself from freezing.
- Make sure your anti-freeze and windshield wiper fluid are full and keep spare bottles in your car.
- Cars do not need to "warm up" before you drive them, but many people let them warm up out of preference.
- If your car was purchased in an area with a warmer climate, make sure it is outfitted with all-season tires or winter tires.

How to Drive in Slippery/Snowy Conditions

1. DON'T!!! If conditions are extreme and you do not need to go out, don't.
2. SLOW DOWN. Even on highways. You should dramatically reduce your speed when roads are slippery or snowy. Be wary of cars attempting to drive at normal speeds and give them extra space. If conditions are extreme and you are worried about your reduced speed, put your flashers on.
3. DRIVE THROUGH THE FISHTAIL. If your car starts to fishtail, remember these three things:
 - a. DON'T PANIC!
 - b. Take your foot slowly off the gas, and turn your wheel into the direction of the spin.
 - c. Very gently apply brakes. Sharp braking will make the fishtail worse.
4. DECELERATE AND ACCELERATE SLOWLY when at stoplights and stop signs. This will help you from sliding.
5. Take extra care and slow down on turns. There may be patches of ice that aren't visible.
6. Increase the distance you are behind a car from 3-4 seconds to 6-8 seconds to give your car the necessary time to stop if needed.

Recommended Businesses & Services:

- Belle Tire: questions about tires, free air for tires
- O'Reilly's Auto Part Store: any auto question, free tests to determine car problems
- AAA Roadside Assistance: AAA is a small monthly fee, but can be very helpful, especially for drivers who are not very knowledgeable about cars. AAA can change tires, jumpstart cars, replace batteries, deliver fuel, unlock cars, offer towing, etc. Drivers can enroll in Roadside Assistance with any auto insurance plan.