

Blowing Rock & Boone, NC Winter Driving

Tips for Mountain Driving

Winter Driving Tips - Check List

- Check the [Boone NC Weather](#) and the North Carolina Highway Conditions 1 (877) DOT-4YOU before you travel to the North Carolina High Country and the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina.
- A Portable NOAA Weather Radio can instantly alert you to Hazardous Weather Conditions in your area. The radio tower on Grandmother Mountain in Linville NC (162.450 MHz) provides good reception to the North Carolina High Country, Blowing Rock NC and Boone NC.
- If possible, tell someone where you are going and when you expect to arrive.
- Dress warmly! Wear winter clothing, including winter boots, long sleeve shirts, thermal socks, a hat and gloves. Layered clothing works best. No shorts please. Carry a warm blanket in your car.
- Bring a Map. GPS devices are often incorrect. Be prepared to take an alternative route. Many sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway are closed during inclement winter weather.
- Carry an Ice Scraper and a Snow Brush. Clear off all the snow and ice from the lights, grill, hood, trunk, roof, and all windows before heading out.
- Carry Teflon Lock Spray in your coat pocket - like who uses a key anymore?
- Carry a Cold Weather Survival Kit that includes: extra antifreeze and winter windshield washer fluid; a flashlight and extra fresh batteries; hand warmers; emergency solar blankets; a candle; matches; hazard markers or flares; a small fold up snow shovel; a whistle; hats and gloves; small bottles of water; and high energy food such as chocolate or granola bars. Restock your food supplies once a year.
- Visit the [North Carolina Ski Resorts and Ski Lodges](#).

Winter Driving Tips - Safety First

- If you own a 4x4 or All-Wheel Drive, bring it!
- Watch for shady areas, bridges and overpasses since these places are often the first to freeze as the temperature drops. Reduce speed, use windshield wipers, turn on the low beam headlights, and your fog lights.
- Reduce speed by more than half for packed snow and slow to a crawl on ice. Use 2nd Gear instead of Drive at speeds below 25 m.p.h.
- Increase your following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Stopping distances on snow and ice are greatly increased, so leave a lot of extra space and don't tailgate!
- Drive with your headlights on. All North Carolina motorists are required by law to use headlights whenever they are using their windshield wipers. Clean off your headlights of salt deposits, snow and ice.
- Don't pump anti-lock brakes. The safe way to stop is to 'stomp and steer.'

- If you start to skid, don't panic! Turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid.
- If you get stuck in snow, straighten the wheels and accelerate slowly. Avoid spinning the wheels. Put coarse sand or crushed stone under the drive wheels. Don't use kitty litter - it turns to mush!

Winterize Your Vehicle

- **Studded Snow Tires and Tire Chains:** Studded snow tires are legal in North Carolina, without restrictions. We have had great success running on studded snow tires in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina. Tire chains are permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid, but do limit your speed.
- **Snow Tires:** Use a matching set of deep tread Snow tires that meet the Severe Snow Standard. Snow tires are highly recommended for use during the snow season from November through March.



The Severe Snow Standard is being used by major North American Tire Manufacturers. The tires are marked on the sidewall with a snowflake-on-the-mountain symbol which identifies those tires that meet the required performance in Severe Snow Conditions. We use and recommend Severe Snow Rated snow tires for the best traction on ice and snow. In the Canadian Province of Québec, winter tires such as these, are now required by law during the snow season - so they really do work.

- **Tire Check:** The tread depth of your tires should be at least 1/8" or greater. Make sure you have valve caps to keep out the snow and ice.
- **Tire Pressure:** Check your tire pressure more often in cold weather. Tire pressure decreases as the temperature drops, so add an extra pound or two.
- **Rear Drive Vehicles:** Adding two 50 lb. bags of coarse 'tube sand' on each side of your trunk will improve your snow traction. Coarse sand can be used under the drive wheels if you get stuck. Lowes carries Tube Sand.
- **Winter Wiper Blades:** Install Winter Wiper Blades. These have a special rubber cover to prevent ice and snow from impeding the wiper's performance.
- **Jumper Cables:** Carry a set of Battery Jumper Cables, and know how to use them. A Portable Jump Start System is handy in remote areas.
- **Fluids:** Check and top up antifreeze, transmission, and brake fluids. Switch to a Winter Windshield Washer Fluid -34°F or colder.
- **Engine Oil:** Change your engine oil to a lower viscosity oil, such as 0W20, 0W30 or 5W30 synthetic motor oil. Check your owners manual for the recommended winter oil viscosity for your vehicle. Synthetic motor oil is good to around -50°.
- **Gasoline:** Keep the gas tank at least half full, and add Gasoline Antifreeze or 'HEET' to every second tank. This removes water from fuel system, and prevents gas-line freeze-up.
- **Battery:** If your battery is more than 5 years old, it's time to replace it before it dies. Purchase a Car Battery with High Cold Cranking Amps.
- **Headlight Bulbs:** For optimum lighting performance, replace your headlight bulbs every 2 to 3 years. Headlight bulbs will become cloudy with age. Replace them in pairs. Carry a spare headlight, brake light, and tail light bulb.