

# Safety Matters

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## Driving in Winter Weather

Traveling in severe weather can be both frightening and dangerous. Winter storms, bad weather, and sloppy road conditions are contributors to nearly half a million crashes and over 2,000 road deaths every winter, according to research by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Drivers should know the safety rules for dealing with winter road emergencies. AAA urges drivers to be cautious while driving in adverse weather.

### The Basics

Slow down. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. When driving increase your following distance enough to have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you. Don't crowd a snow plow or travel too closely beside a truck. Snow plows travel slowly, make wide turns, make frequent stops, overlap lanes, and exit the road frequently. If you find yourself behind a snow plow, maintain a safe distance and exercise caution if passing.



### Cold Weather Driving Tips

- Equip your car with cold-weather essentials, such as extra food and water, warm clothing, a flashlight, a glass scraper, blankets, medications, and more.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have sufficient tread.
- Always keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle.
- Avoid warming up a vehicle in an enclosed space like a garage.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow.

### Tips for Driving in the Snow

- **Stay home.** Only go out if necessary. Even if you are an experienced driver in bad weather, it's better to avoid taking unnecessary risks by venturing out.
- **Drive slowly.** Drive at a slower speed to account for lower traction when driving on snow or ice.
- **Accelerate and decelerate slowly.** Apply the gas slowly to gain traction and avoid skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry and take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- **Increase your following distance** to five to six seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the necessary distance needed if you must stop.
- **Know your brakes.** Whether you have antilock brakes or not, keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
- **Windshield wipers.** You can quickly go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid in a single snowstorm. Make sure your vehicle's reservoir is full of "winter" fluid with de-icer before winter weather hits. Make sure defrosters work and replace all worn windshield wipers.
- **Lights.** Check your headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, and interior lights. A great rule of thumb, keep spare lights in the car glove box.

### February's Riddle

(Answers on page 2)

- 1) What is the most romantic ship?
- 2) Why are water bottles so bouncy?
- 3) Who always has a date on Valentine's Day?
- 4) Why did the computer sneeze?
- 5) What do you call a cow with a twitch?
- 6) The Unicorn is the National animal for which country?

# Safety Focused

## The Distraction of Personal Electronic Devices

### What Is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment, or navigation system — anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving.

Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

You cannot drive safely unless the task of driving has your full attention. Any non-driving activity you engage in is a potential distraction and increases your risk of crashing.



### Keep focused to avoid accidents

To address the dangers associated with distracted driving, more and more states have passed laws banning the use of cell phones while behind the wheel. These laws underscore the common and dangerous side effects associated with personal electronic devices.

Our society's safety relies on attentive motorists focused on the task at hand, and such devices can play an unfortunate role in creating accidents. Often motorists think they can safely drive while talking on the phone, texting, or listening to music, yet these actions are often more distracting than most realize.

Don't let the use of personal electronic devices lead to an accident. Do your part to keep distractions out of your daily commute.

### Texting

Texting combines several hazards. Not only does the ongoing conversation distract you, but operating your cell phone also diverts your attention. When inputting a message, it's easy to lose track of what is happening around you as you no longer have a visual connection to your surroundings. While typing a message may seem brief, even a few seconds can be too long in a fast-paced environment.

### Hands-free Devices

Many people mistakenly believe that using a hands-free device allows them to safely talk on the phone without hindering their ability to carry out other tasks. Although such devices free up both hands, studies have repeatedly shown that conversation remains the primary cause of distraction. While using a hands-free device may seem like a safe alternative to a handheld device, it is advisable to avoid using them where your full concentration is needed.



### Answers

- 1- A Courtship
- 2- They are filled with Spring Water
- 3- A Calendar
- 4- It had a virus.
- 5- Beef jerky.
- 6- Scotland (True, look it up)