

Here is an updated release of some winter safety guidelines.

Now:

- Have your vehicle inspected,
 - Check your battery (if <85% of it's life, replace it)
 - Fan belts (Tend to dry out over the summer)
 - Tires, including your spare, a good set of deep treaded mud and snow tires will help a lot. On rear wheel drive cars be sure to have good tires in the front as well. On front wheel drive vehicles the recommend snow tires for the rear axle as well.
 - Tire snow chains (put them on before you get stuck)
 - Coolant system (-20 deg F as a minimum)
 - Windshield wipers (just replace them)
 - Heater and defroster (visibility is a must)
 - Place the shovel in the trunk
 - Lights (at least 1 way to/from work will be in darkness)
 - Place 2 bags of salt or sand in the trunk (added weight and traction supplement for when you get stuck)

Tomorrow:

- Place the following inside your vehicle (not in trunk, these should be accessible without getting out of the vehicle)
 - Large Blanket or bedspread
 - Extra pair of; gloves and socks (mittens are best, but an extra pair of socks will double as mittens)
 - Stocking hat
 - 2-3 candy bars or other high carbohydrate foods
 - 1 roll of toilet paper
 - 1 good 3-4 cell flashlight
 - Box of safety matches
 - 3 highway flares and 1 flashing light flare
 - 1 gallon of distilled water; it will freeze overnight in your vehicle so do not fill it full
 - pair winter boots, deep rubber sole, water proof, and insulated
 - good book with extra light such as florescent /LED
 - flashlight, book light, candles work well heat source *
 - Trash bag (Black, 33 gallon, makes a weather proof emergency shelter)

Everyday:

- Let someone know where you are going, how you are getting there, and when you plan to arrive. On long or nighttime trips set a time to call them when you get there. Check the local weather and if possible, road conditions before

you leave. Due to the vastly different terrain, road substrate, and altitude do not rely solely on weather reports for the area. Weather varies significantly within a few miles. Ensure you have enough gas for the trip plus at least 20 % extra. Try not to let your gas tank drop below 1/2 full (1/2 empty for you pessimists)

Drive slow; reduce speed to 50% below your normal speed on the same clear, dry road when on packed snow, 25 % below normal speed if on ice. Apply brakes before going into turns. Make slow gradual turns and do not overshoot. Do not stop on uphill grades, continue rolling at a crawl. Downshift the transmission on downgrades to avoid using brakes. Look ahead of you for stalled vehicles in your lane. Turn on headlights so people see you. In heavy fog run your emergency flashers.

In New Mexico state snowplows have the Right-Of-Way. Slow down and give them plenty of clearance when passing in the opposite direction. Don't pass in the same direction unless signaled by driver. Stay back 30-50 feet when following them. Here they normally operate in groups of 2 or 3 (plows with separate sand truck) may even have a lead pickup truck. They will operate at times in the opposite lane.

When Stuck:

Don't panic, try rocking vehicle and/or apply parking brake 1/2 way (on rear drive vehicles this is a poor person's version of a limited slip axle to get some power to both rear wheels) If stuck on the road get out the highway flares to warn other motorists, give them plenty of warning so they can stop (100 to 200 ft). Use the shovel if able to dig your vehicle out. Rubber floor mats under the slipping tires may provide just the needed friction to get you going. Use salt or sand to aide in traction. Hopefully you have had the snow chains on already so there is no reason to put them on now! Stay in the car as much as possible, it provides you protection from the elements and other drivers.

If really stuck:

Don't panic. If off the road set out something that identifies that you are there (window shade, trash bag, flashing light flare). Place on trees, antennas, or roadside posts, but not on the ground as they will get covered over. Stay with the vehicle (yes, I know this goes against everything your mind is telling you but it really is for the best. I assure you it is easier for someone to find your vehicle than for them to find you). Run the engine to keep you warm only if: engine compartment is not buried, tail pipe is not buried, window is cracked open away from exhaust fumes, no more than 10 minutes at a time, and never if sleepy. Use of alternate heat source* in the car is preferred. Get out the book, turn on the radio and relax, sleeping is OK if uninjured, but if you have a head injury stay awake. Cover up with the blanket and put on the extra clothes. If your feet are wet from walking outside change socks and boots NOW. Take off your watch and forget about time. It will pass quite slowly and it will cause you to want to do stupid things, like walking for help. Loosen any restricted clothing such as belts,

rings, etc. when blood flow is restricted valuable heat is prevented from getting to where it needs to go and as a result frostbite often sets in.

- * Heat source; Candles,
Electric heater from cigarette adapter
Start campfire outside of vehicle (use road flares)
Propane lantern/burner
Chemical hand warmers (warning :they do have a shelf life)
Homemade heater made from a coffee can filled with a roll of toilet paper.

--- Pour 70% ISO. alcohol in can. (Toilet paper acts as wick) Light with matches for 15 minutes every hour and it should keep your vehicle's interior around 70 deg. especially if covered in a blanket of insulating snow. 3-4 bottles of alcohol will last throughout the night. Crack open a window to be sure and let in a little air to avoid depleting the oxygen.

Cell phone, if it works use it but always set a time to contact people again and turn it off when not in use. Call only 911 unless they direct you to another number. Give them names and numbers of friends and family and have them contact them – save your batteries. If not enough signal for a voice call, try text message. Even if you get little to no signal, turn on your phone every hour for 10 minutes then off. The cell tower may still register your signal. During daylight hours you can travel within sight distance of your vehicle to try and get better reception. Again if you do not know the area, know exactly where you are going and how far , do not just start walking.

Most of this is either common sense and/or has been talked about for years yet few of us actually prepare or act this way when these things happen and as a result many people die each year from winter related accidents.

If you prepare even slightly, remain calm and have told folks your route and when to expect you, you will survive. Depending on the remoteness of your location it may be hours/a day / or a few days.