



THE SMART DRIVER'S



# WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SAFELY  
NAVIGATE WINTER ROADS**

## DID YOU KNOW?

**18% OF COLLISIONS**  
caused by following  
too closely

**11% OF COLLISIONS**  
caused by  
driving too fast for  
conditions

**300+**

snowplows  
and sanders  
on provincial  
roads

**TOP 3  
REASONS**

for winter  
service calls:  
tows, battery  
service, vehicle  
unlocks



Shows a tire meets  
requirements  
for providing  
traction in harsh  
conditions



CAA SASKATCHEWAN

# WINTERIZE YOUR RIDE

*We've made a list for you to check twice before heading out on winter roads*



**OIL:** Make the switch to synthetic. When temperatures drop, it won't thicken up like conventional oil, allowing it to flow better, reduce engine wear and provide easier start-up in winter.



**WIPERS AND FLUID:** Replace worn-out blades. Top up with winter-grade washer fluid—it won't freeze in the reservoir and damage hoses during below-zero temps.



**BELTS AND HOSES:** Visually inspect them for cracks, bulges and leaks, which can form in temperature fluctuations. These should be checked annually. If you spot a problem, get your technician to take a look.



**BATTERY:** Cold conditions can weaken it and cause it to fail. Get your battery tested or have a new one installed by CAA Mobile Battery Service (Regina and Saskatoon), Regina Battery Depot or CAA Approved Auto Repair Service partners.



**BATTERY TENDER:** When leaving your vehicle parked for an extended period, a battery tender will keep it charged at the proper storage voltage. Get one at [caask.ca/shop](http://caask.ca/shop), Regina Battery Depot (CAA Members save 10%) or through CAA Mobile Battery Service.



**ALL-SEASON VS. WINTER TIRES:** Rubber in all-seasons starts to lose elasticity and harden at around 7 C, reducing its ability to grip the road. Rubber designed for snowy and icy conditions will perform better than all-seasons: The deep tread design provides up to 50 percent better traction on winter roads.



**TIRE PRESSURE:** When the thermometer goes down, so does your tire pressure. Check tires at least monthly (don't forget the spare) or more often during cold temperatures—you can lose up to five PSI in drastic temperature swings.



**BLOCK HEATER:** Check it with a block-heater tester before frigid conditions set in. Make sure you don't have any cracks or tears in the cord. Plug in at -15 C and lower.



**PRO CHECK-UP:** Get a seasonal check-up with an automotive pro. Regina's CAA Car Care Centre in Regina or CAA's AARS shops offer complete inspections by trained auto techs. And all work is backed by a 12-month or 20,000-km warranty.

Visit [caask.ca/car-care-centre](http://caask.ca/car-care-centre) or [caask.ca/AARS](http://caask.ca/AARS)

## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

*Decrease your chance of distress by storing a roadside emergency kit in your trunk. Keep it stocked with these and other essential items*



Charge-by-hand LED flashlight



A compact bag to carry it all



Collapsible snow shovel



Reflective caution triangle



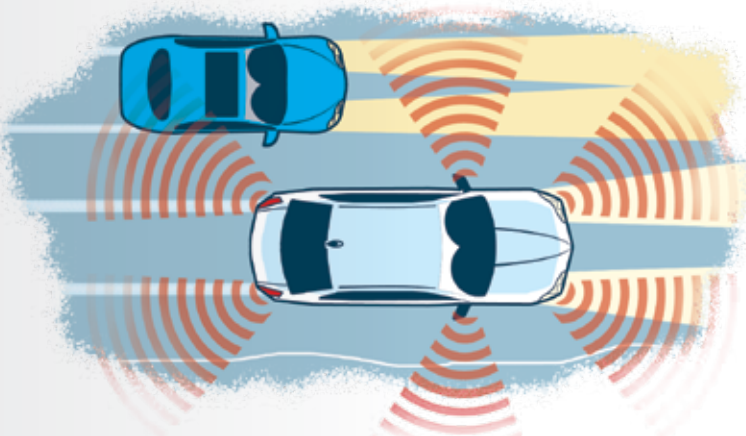
Battery booster cables

## Kitted out

Get CAA Saskatchewan's deluxe roadside kit at your local CAA Store, or online at [caask.ca/shop](http://caask.ca/shop)

Member price: \$106.50  
(other kit varieties also available)





## SENSORS VS. SNOWFLAKES

*How to handle your car's high-tech features in snow and ice*

**OUR VEHICLES ARE** increasingly loaded with high-tech devices designed to keep us safe on the road. But these systems aren't perfect—especially in harsh winter weather. While technology can help us, the onus is still on drivers to make sure we drive safely.

### BLIND-SPOT MONITORING

Sensors near the rear bumper use radar to determine if another vehicle is coming up alongside yours.

### WINTER WARNING:

Rain and snow may confuse radar signals, limiting their effectiveness. Most systems warn motorists with a signal light on the driver-side mirror. Make sure it's free of snow.

### LANE-DEPARTURE WARNING

Video, laser and/or infrared sensors detect visible road markings to warn you if you're about to unintentionally cross them.

### WINTER WARNING:

Sensors typically have trouble deciphering road markings that are faded—or covered by snow.

### FORWARD COLLISION WARNING

A forward-facing camera or radar alerts you to take corrective action if your vehicle is about to collide with another. A more advanced version of this tech, forward collision mitigation, can apply the brakes.

### WINTER WARNING:

Like other radar- and camera-based tech, sensors may be affected by snow and ice. And

slippery roads mean longer braking distances: Even with a warning, your vehicle may not be able to stop in time.

### BACK-UP CAMERA

Allows you to see the area directly behind your vehicle while it's in reverse.

### WINTER WARNING:

Snow, slush and ice can cloud the camera lens. Wipe it off before getting behind the wheel.

### TIRE-PRESSURE MONITORING

Direct monitoring systems have a sensor in each wheel, alerting you to pressure changes. Indirect

systems monitor the rotational speed of all wheels simultaneously. A tire that's losing pressure will spin faster, and thus trigger an alert.

### WINTER WARNING:

Most winter tires aren't equipped with pressure sensors. So, if your car has a direct system, talk to your tire manufacturer or mechanic to see if sensors can be installed. With indirect systems, you won't be alerted if all four tires are losing pressure at the same rate—which can happen with cold winter temperatures.

## SNOW VOCAB

*They say Inuit peoples have dozens of words for snow—so too does the weatherman when it comes to wintry road conditions*



### "PAVEMENT FROST"

A buildup of frost that reduces braking power

### "DRIFTING SNOW"

Blowing snow caused by winds; may cause snow to stick on road surfaces and lower visibility

### "SWIRLING SNOW"

Loose snow circling on road surfaces; caused by wind and traffic

### "LOOSE SNOW"

Less than 8 cm of uncompressed flakes covering the driving surface

### "HEAVY SNOW"

More than 8 cm of denser snow that can cause problems stopping or passing

### "SNOW PACKED"

The entire road is coated in densely packed snow

### "SNOW DRIFTS"

Small peaks of snow at intermittent intervals

### "VISIBILITY REDUCED"

Drivers can see less than 800 metres ahead

## RULES OF THE ROADSIDE

*Sometimes you still end up stuck, no matter how much you winterize or how safely you drive. Follow these rules so you're not left in the cold for long*

### RULE NO. 1:

#### **Don't panic**

Keep calm and carry on to rule number two.

### RULE NO. 2:

#### **Stay with your vehicle**

It will make it easier for rescuers or tow operators to find you. Know where you are so you can identify your location.

### RULE NO. 3:

#### **Call CAA**

We're here for you 24/7. Call **1-800-222-4357** or request service online at [caask.ca](http://caask.ca) or on our mobile app.

### RULE NO. 4:

#### **Make an SOS**

Place a bright rope or scarf in a rolled up window to signal distress.

### RULE NO. 5:

#### **Don't overexert yourself**

Pushing or digging out will just make you cold and tired.

### RULE NO. 6:

#### **Stay warm**

Run the engine just long enough to remove the chill; then turn it off to conserve fuel. Clear snow and ice from the exhaust pipe to prevent carbon monoxide leaking into the vehicle.

## HOW TO DRIVE SMARTER

*Ten essential strategies for smarter driving on wintry roads*

**1.** Always, always, *always* check road and weather conditions before heading out. If they're poor, stay off the roads—in bad conditions, CAA's service providers may not be able to assist you until conditions improve.

**2.** Plan your route in advance. Allow extra time for travel and let others know your route and ETA.

**3.** Snow and ice can triple your stopping distance. Leave more-than-normal space between the car ahead of you and use turn signals well in advance to alert drivers behind you.

**4.** Focus on smooth braking and steering in slippery conditions: If you jerk the wheel or slam the brakes, your tire treads could lose traction with the road and start sliding.

**5.** Don't crowd the plow. While it is legal to pass snowplows, always give operators room to work—to prevent collisions and to help them clear roads quicker. Plows can impact visibility by scattering loose snow, so it's best to slow down, stay back and wait for the plow to move aside before attempting a pass.



**6.** Always slow down at intersections and pay special attention in school zones.

**7.** Slow down when passing tow trucks—it's the law. Saskatchewan motorists must slow to 60 km/hour near working tow trucks with safety lights flashing on highways. If you're travelling on a multi-lane highway, try to also move to the far lane.

**8.** Driving experts and educators can teach you smarter driving strategies, like threshold braking,

steering techniques and how to get out of a skid. Brush up on your skills at a driving school or contact the Saskatchewan Safety Council: [sasksafety.org](http://sasksafety.org)

**9.** Pack extra clothing and gear for all occupants, including: footwear, non-perishable food, water, flashlight, blankets and battery booster cables.

**10.** Carry a fully charged mobile phone and charger with you for emergency use. A properly charged phone could be your lifeline in an emergency.

## We're here to help!

To contact CAA Roadside Assistance:

• Call **1-800-CAA-HELP**

• Submit an online request at [caask.ca](http://caask.ca)

• Send a request through the CAA mobile app, free to download at [caa.ca/mobile](http://caa.ca/mobile)



# ON CALL

*Behind the scenes at a CAA Dispatch Centre*



**WHEN CAA SASKATCHEWAN** Members experience car trouble or a roadside emergency, the first person to hear about it is an employee at the CAA Communications Centre. Manager Cindy Rosom has helped innumerable drivers and their vehicles to get back on the road.

## What is the primary job of a dispatcher?

A dispatcher becomes involved after the customer service agent (CSA) has entered a Member's information into our computer system. Dispatchers review those details to ensure the appropriate service vehicle is sent to meet the Member's needs.

## Can you describe a particularly memorable rescue request?

A few years ago, one of our customer service agents received a call from a Member near Davidson, Saskatchewan. It became evident

that the Member was having a medical problem; thanks to some quick thinking, our CSA kept the Member on the phone while a dispatcher contacted emergency medical services. Our staff went the extra mile and comforted him until medical assistance arrived. Ultimately, the Member made a complete recovery.

## Are certain times busier than others at the dispatch centre?

When the weather conditions drop below -15 C, call volumes increase. And as temperatures dip, we get busier and busier. We recommend that Members plug their vehicles in when the temperature drops below -15 C. This helps keep the engine warm and lessens the chance of starting problems.

## What method of contact is best for Members in need of urgent assistance?

CAA Saskatchewan developed Road Service Express to automate assistance requests from Members who are safe at their home location. This is the most efficient system. It frees up our customer service agents to concentrate on Members who may be in unsafe, emergency situations—vehicles stranded on the highway with no heat, for example, or vehicles that are blocking traffic.

## Anything else that Members should keep in mind?

Weather and road conditions can sometimes delay us from coming to Members' aid. Follow safe winter driving procedures to decrease the risk of a serious emergency. And always have a fully charged mobile phone and phone charger in the car, and keep a roadside emergency kit in your vehicle, including proper winter clothing and footwear, plus non-perishable food and water.

[caask.ca/roadside](http://caask.ca/roadside)  
[caask.ca/safety](http://caask.ca/safety)

# ANATOMY OF A RESCUE CALL

*A disabled vehicle in winter is not only inconvenient, it can be downright dangerous—especially if you're stuck in an unfamiliar or remote location*



## CALLING FROM HOME?

The automated CAA Road Service Express system gathers your information and immediately sends it to the nearest service provider.



## STUCK ON THE STREET?

When a roadside call goes to a customer service agent, your safety and circumstances are assessed, and other key details are recorded. The call is then processed by a CAA dispatcher.



## CREATE A RESCUE PLAN

A dispatcher uses the information to send the appropriate truck as soon as possible. (Different problems and vehicle types require the help of different trucks.)



## WHILE YOU WAIT

The information is sent to the truck operator. Meanwhile, the dispatcher strives to stay connected with the member, providing status updates by phone, text or email.



## HIP HIP, HOORAY!

CAA arrives at your breakdown location to get you out of the cold and on your way again.



CAA tow operator  
Jerry Merk

# MOVE OVER!

*Making room for tow truck drivers isn't just the law—it's a matter of life and death*

**ONE WINTER DAY**, tow operator Jerry Merk was on a road just outside White City, winching a car from a ditch onto his deck truck. He heard a horn blast and looked up to see a semi-trailer truck switching lanes, with a red pickup right behind. Merk got out of the way just in time to see the pickup hit his truck, roll over and land right beside the car Merk was there to tow—with a frightened family inside.

"Nobody got hurt, but if that guy had landed on the car, it would have been a much different outcome. The family didn't even know what was going on—it all happened in the blink of an eye," says Merk, who has operated Merk's Towing & Storage in the Indian Head area since 2003.

For Merk, who has worked in towing for more than 30 years, such accidents happen far too often.

Though he takes great pride in helping people during stressful times of breakdowns, he always splits his attention between doing his job and looking over his shoulder to watch for careless drivers. Ignoring pylons and flashing lights, they sometimes whiz past within a hair's breadth of his truck or the vehicle he's towing.

Merk's three children sometimes accompany him on calls, including his 24-year old son who has a particular interest in joining the family business. But inattentive drivers make Merk hesitant to let his son follow in his footsteps.

"I don't feel anybody is ever totally ready to be working on the side of the

road. You hope you trained them well enough, but then you always worry about someone coming down the road without looking," he says.

The rules of the road are clear: Drivers must slow to 60 kilometres per hour on Saskatchewan highways when passing a working tow truck with its safety lights flashing. On double-lane highways, motorists should also try to move to the far lane to give operators room to work safely.

The Saskatchewan government is considering new legislation to allow tow trucks to be outfitted with lights that flash amber and red. These signals are instantly recognizable and are more attention-grabbing than the amber lights they use now. Still, Merk insists that better driver education is even more essential.

If you see something on the side of the road—a tow truck, pedestrian, cyclist, another vehicle or something you can't quite make out—reduce your speed and safely move over as far as possible, preferably changing lanes. "If people are only slowing down when they see a beacon, there's still a hazard of somebody being there without the lights," Merk says.

Drivers who have a breakdown should also take a few precautions: Try to get your vehicle as far off the road as possible and turn on your

four-way flashers. The ditch or fence line are the safest places to wait for a tow. If weather conditions force you to wait inside your vehicle, Merk says you should avoid sitting in the back or driver's seat, where you are more likely to be seriously harmed if another driver smashes into you.

Slow down. Move over: We can all do our part to make the roadside a safe place to work. **CAA**

To learn more: [caask.ca/safety](http://caask.ca/safety)

*Try to get your vehicle as far off the road as possible and turn on your four-way flashers. The ditch or fence line are the safest places to wait for a tow*