



WINTER AND HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS: GOOD IDEAS FOR YOUR TRIP AND SAFETY



Traveling during the winter holidays can often times be dangerous and stressful. Not only are the airports crowded, the roadways can be just as bad. Weather conditions are important to follow because snow, ice and rain can make for unpleasant traveling if you are not prepared.

Here are several tips to help prepare for you upcoming winter holiday travel trips.

Check weather and road condition updates

This is probably one of the most important to follow. Preparing for holiday travel this winter includes understanding the weather and road conditions you may be facing on your journey. Following your local news stations will often provide weather and winter advisories for travel. If road conditions are inadequate and storms are approaching, it is always safest to wait till the roads are clear and the weather has passed. Checking for road updates is also a key factor in deciding to travel. Such updates will provide road closures, car accidents and chain control areas. When traveling, we use the Caltrans Quick Maps mobile application. It is always important to watch for flashing road signs while driving to advise for conditions. Being updated in advanced is the most important because poor road conditions, such as snow and ice can lead to road closures. Depending on the location, road closures can stop freeway traffic for

several miles in both directions. Making sure to have a full gas tank and food/water will help if you happen to be stopped for an extended period of time. Having the knowledge of what to expect on your journey is key when traveling during this winter holiday season.

Make sure your vehicle is rated for winter conditions

Depending if you are driving through higher elevations, such as Lake Tahoe or the Sierras, it is important to make sure your vehicle is equipped for rain and snow conditions. Most vehicles on the road are 2-wheel drive. Having a vehicle that is rated for snow and rain will assist with these types of occasions. It is always recommended to have an all-wheel drive or 4x4 vehicle if you might encounter bad road conditions on your trip. If you are unable to use the recommended vehicles such as an all-wheel drive, we would suggest purchasing a set of chains specific to your vehicle prior to your journey. Having a set of chains will come in handy if road conditions change and chains become required for travellers. As referenced above, the Caltrans Quick Maps will indicate all chain required locations for your trip.

Make sure your tires are adequate for slippery conditions.

It is always recommended to have proper traction when traveling through slippery conditions. Being prepared for winter road conditions also includes checking tire tread. If you are unfamiliar with tire tread depths, we would advise you to visit a local tire shop to see if your tires are sufficient for winter travel. Often times, a quick measurement will indicate if your tires will be ok for slippery road conditions. If winter travel is a priority, it is best to have a complete snow-rated set of tires. Although all-season tires will work properly, a great set of snow-rated or winter tires are the most effective when driving on slippery conditions. If your vehicle is not an all-wheel drive or 4x4, we suggest carrying a set of snow chains for your vehicle. Snow chains can be purchased at your local auto parts store. Often times snow can accumulate on the road and drivers will be required to have chains unless their vehicle is an all-wheel drive. Having purchased the chains in advanced will save loads of money. People will often charge two to three times higher for chains and installation on the side of freeways before chain control areas. Having chains is just another piece of preparation for winter travel.

Drive Slow – Snow and Ice

The biggest danger on slippery road conditions is losing control of your vehicle. The driver is always responsible for the passengers in the vehicle. When you encounter such conditions, it is always recommended to drive slow and keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead of you. The last thing you would want on a holiday travel trip is a rear-end accident or even sliding off the road. Now the situation becomes even worse if a tow truck is required. Keeping a safe speed and distance will allow a driver to react safely if action is required. Staying in control of

the vehicle is the most important. Even with an all-wheel vehicle and snow tires, losing control on snow or ice can happen very easily. It is always recommended to have your car and brakes serviced prior to your winter travels. If you encounter slippery road conditions such as snow or ice, it is important to test your brakes in a safe location. Understanding your vehicles braking capabilities will help you to understand that following vehicles at a distance is key to driving in slippery conditions. It is important to drive at a safe speed while maintaining vehicle control at all times. A holiday trip through the snow is often like a winter wonderland, however, making it there safely is the most important. Taking precautionary steps will help to improve the success of your holiday road trip. Prior to starting your trip, it is equally important to ensure your vehicle is properly insured. Although travel insurance is useful for reservations, it is more important to have the proper motor vehicle insurance coverage for you and your passengers. This is to ensure that any potential damages or injuries will be covered by vehicle insurance. Here are a few other items you may want to include for your winter holiday travel trip. Expect the worst conditions and be prepared with an emergency kit in your car as follows:

- FLASHLIGHT
- BLANKETS, EXTRA CLOTHING, WATER & SNACKS
- SNOW CHAINS
- GLOVES – Helpful to protect hands from the cold
- ICE SCRAPER/DEICER – To keep windows clear of snow
- SHOVEL – To free your vehicle should you get snowed in.

If you have suffered any type of damage or injury caused by the vehicle, you can seek the assistance of a [personal injury lawyer in Sacramento](#).