

November - Drivers should prepare now for fall and winter travel challenges

Several factors help explain why traffic crashes tend to peak in Wisconsin over the next three months. Along with the potential for wintry weather, there are decreased hours of daylight, increased deer activity, combined with several major travel periods. The Village of Brooklyn Law of the Month for November highlights steps drivers should take to prepare themselves and their vehicles to safely navigate the fall and winter driving seasons.

A primary factor behind many crashes and slide-offs is drivers who are going too fast for conditions. To help ensure a safe trip, check the weather forecast and remove any frost, ice or snow from vehicle windows. Then, make sure everyone is buckled up, watch your speed, scan the road ahead carefully and allow adequate following distance.

Posted speed limits apply to ideal travel conditions. State law ([346.57](#)) requires drivers to operate at a speed that is "reasonable and prudent" to maintain safe control of their vehicle. State law ([346.88](#)) also requires drivers to keep all vehicle windows "reasonably clean at all times."

When roads become slippery:

- Slow down. Avoid sudden braking or steering. Don't use cruise control.
- Don't be overconfident if you have a four-wheel or all-wheel-drive vehicle. All vehicles require additional time and distance to stop in slippery conditions.
- Remember that bridge decks and overpasses tend to freeze up first.

Make sure that your vehicle is prepared for the challenges ahead:

- Ensure that vehicle tires are properly inflated, have adequate tread and that the battery and cooling system are in good condition.
- Put a snowbrush/scrapper in each vehicle, replace worn windshield wipers and have adequate washer fluid.
- Make sure that headlights and other vehicle lights are operating properly.
- Keep your fuel tank at least half-full to help prevent fuel lines from freezing and provide necessary fuel should you become stranded.

If your vehicle breaks down, or you slide off the road, it's generally safest to stay buckled up inside your vehicle until help arrives. Getting out of your vehicle and walking around a highway is always dangerous, but especially when roads are slippery.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's [website](#) provides more tips on safe winter driving, things to consider should you become stranded, keeping your vehicle properly maintained and how to prepare an emergency winter travel kit.

BROOKLYN POLICE DEPARTMENT