

## Safety Tips For Winter Travel



By Kathleen Brady, Loss Control Consultant

The winter weather in Minnesota is horrible. It can get so cold that a prudent traveler has a winter survival kit in the car in case of being stranded.

The Minnesota Safety Council sells a Blizzard Bucket for just such a possibility on the web site at [www.mnsafetycouncil.org](http://www.mnsafetycouncil.org)., under safety products in the safety catalog, for \$17.95. It has some of the things you ought to store in your car for the winter, but perhaps not all. I consulted an article in the *AAA Home/Away* magazine at [www.homeandawaymagazine.com](http://www.homeandawaymagazine.com) called, "A Cold Night to Remember." It contained a list of suggestions for a winter survival kit. I have combined the lists from the MN Safety Council and the article, below.

### Some Interesting And Important Things To Remember:

- When preparing to travel, the article in *Home/Away* advises to keep the gas tank at least half full.
- Check the weather before you leave and avoid traveling in foul weather.
- Cover your head, the body will store heat in the trunk and head, not the fingers or toes. The idea is to prevent frostbite in your extremities.
- Do not drink alcohol when stranded because it dilates surface blood vessels, allowing heat to escape, and clouds judgment.
- Huddle with others for mutual heat.
- Occasional deep breathing and rapidly moving arms and legs will increase circulation.
- Do not sit in one position very long.
- Stay with your vehicle. Do not try to walk in a blizzard because it's easy to get lost or disoriented.
- Do not overexert yourself in cold weather by trying to push your vehicle or dig it out of the snow. Overexertion is dangerous in low temperatures.
- If possible, keep the dome light on at night to make it easier to see your vehicle. The dome light uses a small amount of current from the battery.
- Use floor mats or whatever is available to insulate your body.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is clear so that carbon monoxide gas doesn't leak into the car.
- Open a window slightly on the side away from the wind and snow for fresh air.
- Conserve gasoline by running the engine just long enough to take the chill off.

## Suggested Survival Kit For Your Car:

- Long-burning candle.
- Waterproof matches.
- Bucket- To use as a heater, stick candle on the bottom of the bucket with hot wax and hang from mirror.
- Enamel cup to use to melt snow over the candle.
- A container for storing melted water inside your coat to keep it from freezing.
- Blanket- The MN Safety Council has a high tech blanket in the kit that wraps one person or covers two. Or, have a sleeping bag or blanket (s).
- Heavy boots, insulated outerwear.
- Chemical foot and hand warmers.
- Socks, hats, mittens, face mask- mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Large size garbage bag to use as a container or poncho.
- Zip lock bag.
- Energy Bars, toaster pastries, trail mix, packets of soup, tea, or high-energy food that stores easily.
- First Aid Kit- band-aids and aspirin
- Swiss knife or screwdriver.
- Snow and ice scraper.
- Warning Device- such as flares or reflective triangles.
- "Call Police" sign or other signal that you need help.
- Flares.
- Car compass.
- Plastic Bag- to use to free bucket for other uses, or store garbage.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Booster cables.
- Sand or kitty litter.
- Traction mats or carpet pieces.
- Small shovel.
- Tow chain or rope.
- Paper towels.
- Spoons.
- Whistle.
- Coins for emergency calls.