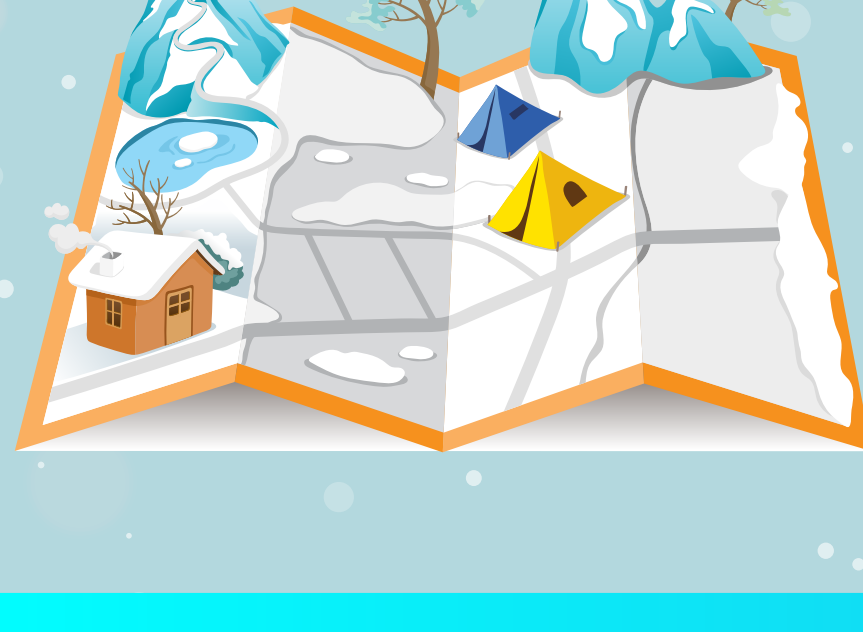


# WINTER CAR SURVIVAL GUIDE



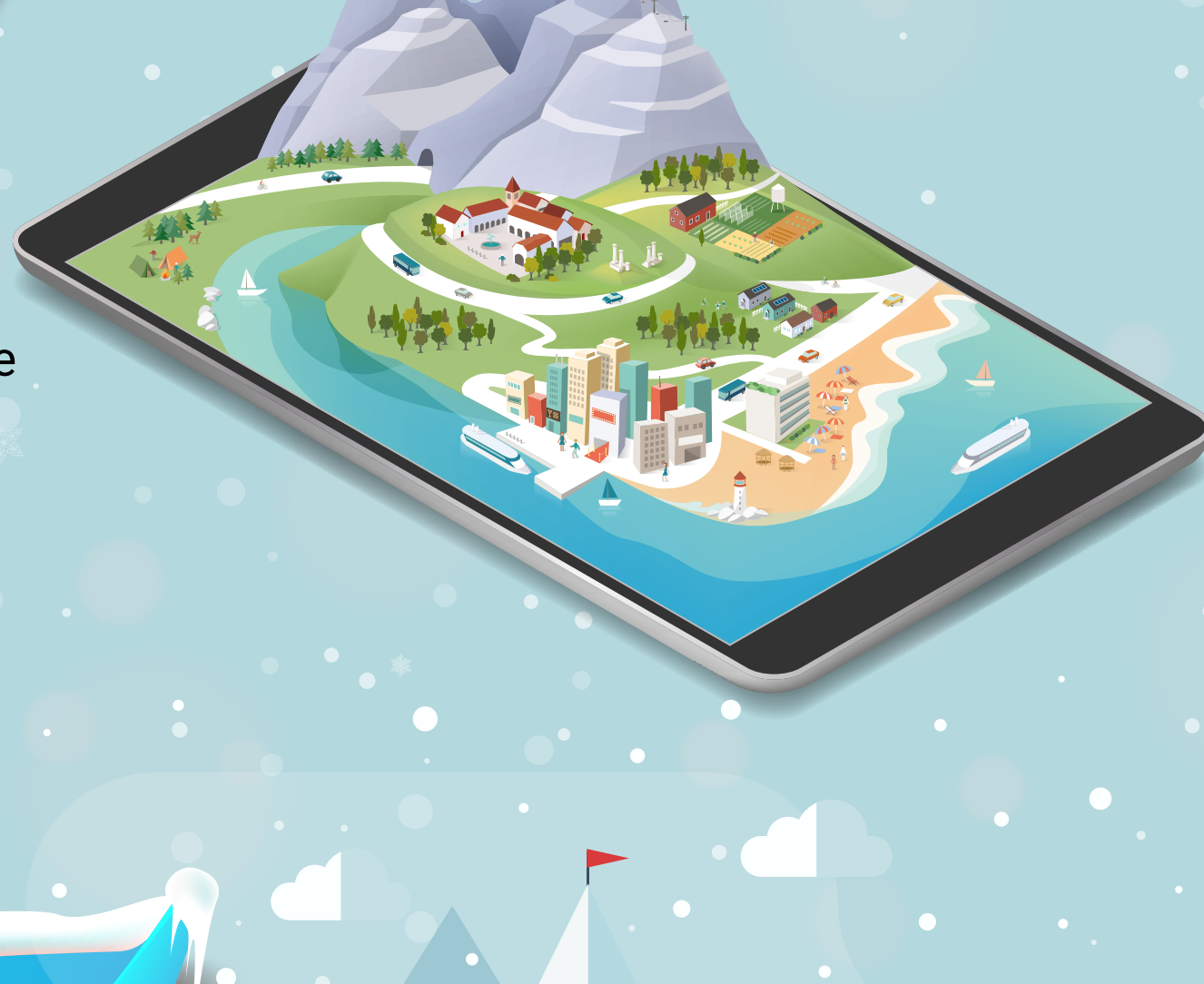
Colorado's winter weather can be unpredictable. One hour, it may be sunny and dry. And the next day, you may watch snow fall onto roofs, cars, and sidewalks. The state is no stranger to blizzards, though more often than not, snow accumulates only to be gone within a day or two. Because of the unpredictable nature of weather, and the potential for severe conditions, you need to be prepared for winter driving in Colorado. This is especially true if you are new to the area, or if you have a teenager who recently obtained their permit or license.

*This guide can serve as a helpful reminder to long-time residents and a resource for visitors, new residents, and new drivers.*

## RISKS OF WINTER WEATHER

During a Colorado winter, you need to be prepared to encounter:

Freezing	Fog
Rain	Wind
Snow	Ice
Sleet	Black Ice
Hail	



## WINTER WEATHER DRIVING STATISTICS

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) tracks car crashes in various ways. Two methods of recording crashes are based on weather conditions and road conditions. This can give you a great deal of information regarding collisions that occur in winter and poor weather throughout the year.



### Colorado Crashes by Weather Conditions 2005-2016

**Snow/Sleet/Hail:** Throughout 2005 to 2016, there were 105,196 crashes related to snow, sleet, and hail.

**Rain:** Between 2005 and 2016, there were 55,104 crashes during the rain.

**Wind:** Between 2005 and 2016, wind was observed in 10,602 accidents.

**Fog:** Fog was recorded in 3,631 accidents between 2005 and 2016.



### Colorado Crashes by Road Conditions 2005-2016

**Wet:** Colorado had 93,083 crashes between 2005 and 2016 when the roads were wet.

**Icy:** Colorado had 84,241 crashes on icy roads between 2005 and 2016.

**Snowy:** Between 2005 and 2016, snowy roads led to 50,032 crashes.

**Slushy:** Between 2005 and 2016, there were 12,898 crashes involving slushy roads.



## TIPS FOR DRIVING SAFELY IN WINTER

### Avoid Driving in Snow When You Can:

When it is bad outside, and the roads are not dry or clear, you should consider whether you really need to drive. If you can stay in, you should. If you have to go out, make sure you are ready to drive safely and have a winter survival kit in the car.



### Do Not Use Cruise Control:

Using cruise control is dangerous when the roads have accumulated snow or slush. You need to maintain control of the vehicle and its speed at all times. Your hands and feet must be ready to respond to a sudden change in circumstances.

### Conduct Pre-Winter Vehicle Maintenance:

Before winter, you need to check all of the fluids in your vehicle and make sure they are topped off. When you check how much windshield wiper fluid you have, also test your wipers. If they are not effective, buy a new pair. You also should check your battery's charge.



### Leave Greater Distances Between Yourself and Others:

Double or triple the amount of distance you leave between your vehicle and others to reduce the risk of a crash.

### Think Twice About Your Tires:

You need to check your tire pressure and tread before it snows. Take a penny and set it in your tire's tread with Lincoln's head turned downward. If the tire tread covers any part of Lincoln's head, the tire is fine. However, if the tread does not reach his hair, you need new tires. Also, if you plan to go into the mountains during winter, review Colorado law regarding when you need snow tires or chains.



### Change Your Braking Habits:

Never slam on your brakes during bad weather. Also, when the roads are wet, or it is snowing, always start to brake sooner than you normally would.

### Prepare to Slow Down:

When driving during poor weather and road conditions, you must slow down. You may need to drive below the speed limit to be safe, however do not impede the flow of traffic.



## WHAT TO DO AFTER A WINTER WEATHER ACCIDENT



### After a Crash

If you are in a collision with another vehicle during winter weather, your main priority should be your health and safety. Always call 911 right away. If you can safely do so, move your car out of traffic. If the weather is bad, stay in the car unless it appears to be unsafe to do so. Subject yourself to the weather as little as possible. However, if you are not badly injured—and the weather is not a danger—then leave your car to gather information and document the crash. It can be difficult if it is raining or snowing, but you can try to take pictures or photos of the damaged vehicles.

You must be mindful of other drivers' visibility. If you have a high-visibility vest, jacket, or other item, put it on. If you have reflective road signs or flares, put those out.

Whenever possible, get the other driver's name, contact information, and insurance information. If you are not able to take these steps because of an injury or severe weather, don't worry. You or your personal injury attorney can obtain information from the police officer's crash report.

### If You Get Stuck

A common winter-related accident is getting your vehicle stuck. Before spinning your wheels and digging yourself into a deeper trench, consider what you have to use. If you have a winter kit in your car, you should have gravel or kitty litter. Spread this under your tires to absorb some moisture and create traction. If you have a shovel, you may be able to clear your vehicle's path a small amount. If you are in a ditch, try to tie a high visibility item to a high point on your vehicle or place a flare or traffic triangle by the side of the road, if possible. This can help another driver, emergency services, or a tow truck find you.



## MAKE A WINTER SURVIVAL KIT FOR YOUR CAR

You should be prepared for any winter driving situation by having a survival kit in your backseat or trunk. It should be accessible. Don't keep it in the truck if you can't access there from your backseat.

To ensure you can stay safe and warm during a winter incident, your kit should contain:

- Ice scraper
- Blanket (or an extra coat)
- Hat
- Gloves
- Handwarmers
- Flashlight
- Candle
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Shovel
- Kitty litter or gravel
- Visibility tools (high visibility vest, emergency road triangles, LED flares)
- Water
- Snacks
- First aid kit
- Jumper cables



If you are planning on a long trip, then you need to take extra precautions. Plan your route carefully. You should know the towns along the way where you could stop if the weather gets too bad. You should have a wireless phone charger or an extra pre-charged phone battery. Also, make sure you have any extra medications you or a passenger may need.

When traveling with children, it is a good idea to include some extra games in the kit to entertain and distract them in an emergency.



## WERE YOU INJURED IN A WINTER DRIVING CRASH?

If you were hurt in a car crash during the winter, or lost a loved one in a collision, it is best to speak with an experienced Denver car accident attorney as soon as possible. When another driver is negligent and at fault for the crash, you have the right to pursue compensation for your injuries.

Call the Law Office of Jennifer L. Donaldson toll free at (866) 458-5008 or contact the firm online to schedule a free consultation.

