

Security Spotlight

An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees



Securitas Canada, January 2017

Navigating the Winter Season



As we begin 2017 we should use this time to clean the slate and make a fresh start. Most people use the start of a new year to make some type of resolution and we at Securitas Canada encourage you to make your resolutions with a focus on safety during this winter season.

Navigating the Winter Season

Winter can be a wonderful time of the year. The country is blanketed with dazzling white snow. Fans of winter sports can take advantage of an abundance of skiing, ice skating, and sledding, while children can immerse themselves in the joy of building snowmen and snow forts for spectacular snowball fights! Yes, winter can be a joyous time, so long as you can retreat from the cold to the warmth inside your home.

Unfortunately, winter is also a time when snow and ice storms play havoc with the power lines and leave many homes and businesses without heat or light. Winter storms can bring cities to a halt, snarling roadways, closing airports and disrupting services. Bitter cold, driving winds and snow have hit, and severe winter weather is more than just inconvenient; it can be dangerous, especially when driving.

Following are some tips to help safeguard against the two major causes of injury and death associated with winter storms.

Driving in the Snow

The best way to avoid a car accident is to stay off the road. If you must drive in winter conditions, prepare before you go. Make sure car lights, breaks, windshield wipers and battery are in working order. Check your antifreeze and install winter tires with good treads. Maintain at least a half tank of gas for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing. Carry an emergency preparedness kit and keep your cell phone charged.

Always wear your seat belt and never drink and drive. Travel during daylight, try not to drive alone and keep others informed of your route and schedule. Listen to the radio for the latest road conditions. Stay on main roads whenever possible, and don't overestimate your ability to drive in bad conditions like sleet, freezing rain, freezing drizzle and dense fog. Be aware that bridges, ramps and overpasses may freeze first.

Turning on your lights helps you to see and be seen. Slow down and put extra distance between your and the car in front of you. If you need to stop, know how your brakes will respond. In general, press firmly on anti-lock brakes and keep the pedal depressed, even if it begins to shake. Pump non-antilock brakes to avoid locking your wheels and causing the car to slide. If your car starts to slide, turn your wheels in the direction of the skid to straighten out.

Cold Stress Illness

Prolonged exposure to cold can result in **frostbite** and **hypothermia**.

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure. It occurs when the skin freezes and loses water. It typically affects the feet and hands. Stinging or aching followed by numbness and white or pale skin are signs of frostbite. If you suspect frostbite, do not rub the area to warm it. Wrap it in a soft warm cloth, move the person to a warm area, and contact medical personnel.

Hypothermia is a dangerous lowering of the body's core temperature and occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, mental confusion, slowed speech, loss of coordination, drowsiness and exhaustion. If you suspect hypothermia, get the person to a warm location and call for emergency medical help.

Start warming the body slowly. Change into dry clothing and wrap the entire body in warm blankets, covering the head. Warm the core first. Do not give alcohol or caffeinated beverages. Give a warm (not hot) sugary drink or warm broth instead. These procedures are not substitutes for proper medical care and are not intended as medical advice.

Caught in a Winter Storm

To avoid being stranded out in a storm, listen for winter storm or blizzard warnings and stay inside when they are issued. If you are caught outdoors, find shelter as soon as possible. Stay dry and cover all body parts. If no shelter is available, build a wind-break or snow cave for protection. Light a fire for heat and to attract attention. Eat and drink to retain energy and avoid dehydration. Don't eat snow. It will lower your body temperature. Instead, melt it for drinking water.

If you are stranded in your car or truck:

- **Stay inside the vehicle:** Do not set out on foot unless a building is close by. Be careful; blowing snow distorts distances and disorientation occurs quickly. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat. When the engine is running, crack the window to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.
- **Make yourself visible:** Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine. Tie a colored cloth (red is best) to the antenna or door. After snow stops falling, raise the hood to signal you need help.

Be Prepared

The best protection against the hazards of winter storms is to be prepared. The following web site offers valuable information about how to prepare and what to do in the event of an emergency:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safevehicles-safetyfeatures-winterdriving-index-693.htm>

<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/hzd/svrstrms-en.aspx>