

Patience and preparation are keys to safe winter driving

This month, I want to urge motorists to make safety their first priority while driving in inclement weather.

To assist motorists with safe winter driving here are a few tips:

- Allow extra time to get to your destination.
- Maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic ahead.
- Pay attention to the roadways and weather conditions, as they can change rapidly.
- Always pay close attention to bridges and overpasses, as they are often the first to freeze over.
- If you do slide off the side of the road, stay with your vehicle and call the Patrol at 1-877-7-PATROL.
- If you get stuck in snow, make sure that your tail pipe is free of all snow and debris, to decrease your chance of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Your local state troopers also recommend that in the event of a vehicle breakdown, turn on hazard warning lights, safely position the vehicle as far off the road as possible and open the hood. Place a "help" sign in the rear window, and stay inside the vehicle until help arrives. If a cell phone is available, dial 1-877-7-PATROL for assistance and the call will be directed to the nearest Patrol post.

Troopers further suggest all motorists have the following items in their vehicle in case of a breakdown:

- Cell phone
- Road flares or reflectors
- Help or Call Police signs
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Blanket/Sleeping bag
- Small shovel
- Bottled water and energy foods
- Candles and matches
- Tow strap/chain

Up-to-the-minute road conditions are always available by logging onto the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Web site, www.buckeyetraffic.org.

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