



## MaineDOT Flash Facts

### Topic: School Vacation Week

#### Crash Facts:

- Many schools are closed this week for vacation. That means more kids walking and playing near streets, and more families traveling.
- More than 9,000 crashes occurred in February in Maine during the past three years.
- Nearly 50% of the February crashes occur on snow, slush or ice covered roads and another 10% occur on wet roads.

---

It's school vacation week. That means many families are driving to Maine's recreational areas for a winter sports break. February can be a hazardous time, and not just because of road conditions. Visibility can be a real challenge as well. Dirt, sand and salt from the roads can coat your car, making it hard to see and be seen. Here are a few hints:

- Clear snow and ice completely from your vehicle-this provides full visibility for you and prevents hazards to other vehicles caused by snow and ice falling off your vehicle.
- Fill your windshield washer and keep an extra gallon of washer fluid in the car. Running out of fluid in the middle of a trip is worse than inconvenient.
- Keep a rag in your car to frequently wipe mirrors, headlights and taillights. Accumulated dirt makes it very difficult to see and be seen at night.
- Wash the inside of your windows. Sun glare caused by the low sun can be bad this time of year; and dirty glass makes it even worse.
- Turn on your lights anytime it's overcast or stormy so others can see you.

---

It's the middle of school vacation week, and that means lots of children are out and about. The MaineDOT wants to make sure we take special precautions. Snow banks can conceal children who are playing close to the road. Be especially careful near houses and playgrounds and watch for sudden movements. Because of snow and ice, more people may be walking in the road - slow down when pedestrians are near and



allow extra room when passing in case they slip and fall.

If you are walking:

- Always walk facing traffic--it's the law. Walking facing traffic allows you to see what is coming.
  - Watch for vehicles. Poor visibility and slick road surfaces make drivers less able to react quickly.
  - Always wear reflective or light-colored clothing so others can see you.
  - Never use earphones to listen to music. You need to hear vehicles as well as see them.
- 

It's the time of winter when many of us are getting tired of snow. The MaineDOT reminds you that throwing or plowing snow back into the street is illegal -and dangerous for you. It creates a hazardous snow and ice zone right in front of your driveway, making it tough for vehicles to stop quickly. Keep your driveway snow banks as low as possible to increase visibility, and follow these tips until they finally melt away.

- Pull out of intersections and driveways very slowly. If snow banks block your view, pull up gradually until you have unrestricted vision.
- Come to a full stop at stop signs.
- Be on the defensive for cars pulling out of driveways. They may not be able to see you until it is too late.
- Half of February's crashes occur on roads that are snowy or icy. **SLOW DOWN** to maintain stopping and maneuvering control and leave extra following distance.

***Be a Road Model:*** and take precautions to safely handle your vehicle, even during wintry road conditions and make sure everyone is buckled up.