



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Storm and Slippery Driving (and Halloween)

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death during snow and ice storms. Improve your chances of remaining collision-free by finding out how to prepare your vehicle. The MaineDOT reminds you to get your vehicle ready for the change in driving season by checking the following:

- Battery
- Dry gas
- Wipers and Windshield fluid
- Window scraper and snow brush
- Brakes
- Front and rear defroster and heater
- Tires (you need good tread for wet and snow covered roads)
- Cold-weather emergency kit. Include a shovel, tire chains or traction mats, basic tool kit, blanket, battery booster cables, cell phone, extra warm clothing and roadside reflectors or flares.

About 7,000 crashes occur on snow or ice covered road surfaces each year in Maine. These crashes result in 20 fatalities and about 2,500 injuries. Many colder weather driving dangers can be avoided with preparation and safe practices. The MaineDOT advises that you do the following to keep safe this upcoming ice and snow:

- Check weather reports and plan your travel accordingly. Remember that just a short period of time can make a huge difference in road conditions.
- Check road conditions on the web by going to www.511maine.gov or call 5-1-1 for the latest road information.
- Clean your car of all ice and snow. Leaving snow on your car drastically reduces your ability to see, can cause problems for traffic behind you, or could slide and block your visibility.
- Gently tap your brakes to check road surface conditions, but make sure you are on a straight road section with no other traffic close by.
- Remember that 4-wheel drive won't help you stop any faster than two-wheel drive vehicles, so maintain safe speeds and allow plenty of stopping distance.



winter weather is just around the corner, and even in a non-winter month there are about 700 crashes which occur on ice or snow covered roads in Maine, resulting in an average of 3 fatalities and nearly 300 injuries. Two basic safe practices need to be followed at all times, but are forgotten too often, even when road surfaces are slick – maintain a safe speed for the conditions and pay continuous attention to the driving task. Illegal or unsafe speed is a factor in over 40% of crashes on snowy or icy roads, and more than 50% of the resulting fatalities.

As temperatures fall and moisture freezes on road surfaces, slower speeds are critical for safety. The MaineDOT provides the following advice if your vehicle loses traction:

- Take your foot off the accelerator
- Depress the clutch, or if driving an automatic transmission, shift into neutral until you regain control. Gently steer your car in the direction you want the front wheels to go. Be careful not to over-correct.
- Look to where you want to end up—hand/eye coordination really works.
- If your vehicle becomes stuck in the snow or ice, remember to not spin the tires as it only makes the surface slicker and more difficult for your vehicle to get out. Shovel a wheel path for all wheels. Sand, salt or kitty litter around the drive wheels can also help traction.

Halloween is upon us, but some events may be happening during the weekend. Traffic should be an important safety concern to parents and kids on Halloween.

- Nationally, more than 650 children are killed by vehicles each year.
- Children are four times more likely to suffer a pedestrian-related fatality on Halloween than any other night of the year.
- More than one fifth of children aged 5-9 that were killed in traffic crashes were *pedestrians*.
- 46% of pedestrian fatalities occur between 6pm and midnight.

The MaineDOT provides the following fashion tips to keep your trick-or-treater safe this Halloween:

- Costumes should be reflective on all sides so they can be seen.
- Masks should have large eye holes to allow kids to clearly see ahead and to the sides. Face painting is even better.
- Children need to walk, not run, while trick-or-treating.



- Teach children to cross the street only at intersections and crosswalks (and only when safe to do so). They should look left, right, and left again before crossing the street.
- Protect your kids – go trick-or-treating with them!
- When driving, slow down, watch for kids in driveways, yards and the roadway.

Be a Road Model: slow down this winter, and keep under control even when roads are slick.