

KEEP PEDESTRIANS AND PASSENGERS SAFE THIS WINTER



Drivers aren't the only ones at greater risk on the roads in winter. Pedestrians and passengers are injured in winter crashes, too. But by following a few safety tips, we can help keep everyone safer.



PROTECT PEDESTRIANS

Tips for drivers:

Since the average vehicle weighs two tons, drivers have a special obligation to watch for vulnerable pedestrians on winter roads. Follow these tips to help keep pedestrians safe.

- ❄️ **Avoid distractions.** A vehicle going 25 miles per hour travels 37 feet a second. Just a few seconds looking at your phone or adjusting your radio could delay your reaction to a pedestrian stepping into the road.
- ❄️ **Slow down near crosswalks and intersections.** During low-light winter months, pedestrians can blend into dull surroundings, or be obscured by snowbanks. And if roads are slippery, pedestrians could fall as they try to cross. Be prepared to stop at any time.
- ❄️ **Slow down in snowy/icy conditions.** Speed limits are based on dry road conditions. If conditions are slippery, drivers are responsible for reducing their speed.
- ❄️ **Keep your tires in good condition.** Tires with adequate tread are essential for braking and steering effectively on slippery roads.

- ❄️ **.Don't put away your sunglasses for winter.** Glare from the sun and snow can obscure vision, especially during high-traffic times in early morning and late afternoon.
- ❄️ **Take extra care when backing out** of parking spots or driveways. Pedestrians can be hidden by snowbanks or parked cars.
- ❄️ **Look for pedestrians across an entire crosswalk**, especially while turning. Make eye contact and give them the right of way.
- ❄️ **Be extra vigilant in neighborhoods where children are present**, especially around snowbanks.
- ❄️ **When you clear your driveway, don't block the sidewalk.** Shoveling or plowing snow onto the sidewalk can force pedestrians to walk in the road, putting them at greater risk.

Tips for pedestrians:

In winter, shortened daylight hours and blowing snow can hamper visibility. Safety tips for pedestrians include:

- Watch for vehicles before stepping out from behind snowbanks.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing to be more easily seen in low light.
- Cross only at intersections and crosswalks, and make eye contact with drivers before stepping into the street.
- If you must walk along the roadway, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.



PROTECT YOUR PASSENGERS

Seat belts, car seats and booster seats, if used correctly, can protect people you love from harm. In 2017 alone, seat belts saved an estimated 14,955 lives in the U.S. and could have saved an additional 2,549 people — if they had buckled up.



BUCKLE UP

- ❄️ **It's the law.** Michigan law requires that passengers ages 8-15 wear seat belts no matter where they are sitting in the car. Adult drivers and front-seat passengers must wear seat belts.
- ❄️ **Do it right.** Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck. Never put it behind your back or under your arm. The lap belt should rest across your hips, not your stomach.

❄ **If you are pregnant:** You should still wear a seat belt to protect both you and your unborn child. Position the shoulder belt across your chest, and the lap belt **BELOW** your stomach, across your hips. **NEVER** place the lap belt over or on top of your stomach.

❄ **What about airbags?** Airbags are designed to work *with* seat belts, not replace them. In fact, if you are not buckled up during a crash, you can be thrown into a rapidly opening airbag, which could injure or even kill you.



USE CAR SEATS AND BOOSTER SEATS CORRECTLY

❄ **Don't dress infants or toddlers in bulky coats or snowsuits.** The extra bulk keeps the harness straps from fitting tightly enough against baby's chest.

❄ **Instead, dress your little one in thin layers.** Layer tights or close-fitting long underwear under pants, and a close-fitting long-sleeved shirt under a looser fleece top. Add a hat, socks and mittens — they all help preserve body heat but don't interfere with the straps. Then cover the seat with a blanket or coat (the blanket or coat can be removed if your child is too warm later). Make sure to leave the baby's face uncovered so they can breathe easily.

❄ **Use the "pinch test" to be sure the straps are flat and snug.** [This video](#) will show you how to do the test.

❄ **Use accessories with caution.** Anything that comes between the baby and the harness, or the baby's back and the seat, is dangerous. This includes car seat covers and bunting bags. Accessories intended for strollers are unsafe to use in vehicles.

❄ **Allow plenty of time to get ready.** It takes time to get everyone safely strapped in and ready to go. The more time you have, the more likely it will get done correctly.

❄ **Children should ride in car seats or booster seats until they are at least 4' 9" tall.** Until then, adult seat belts will not fit them correctly and will not protect them as well in a crash.

❄ **Children should ride in the back seat** until they are 13 years of age or older, even when they are big enough to use the adult seat belt.

❄ **Michigan law:** Children under the age of four must ride in a car seat in the back seat. If the back seat is fully occupied by other children under four in car seats, or if your car does not have a back seat, one child may ride in the front seat (in a car seat). A child in a rear-facing car seat may ride in the front seat only if the airbag is turned off.



For tips on selecting and installing the right car seat for your child, go to <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-boosters#35091>