



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senator Malcolm Smith Offers Winter Driving Safety Tips

MALCOLM A. SMITH January 18, 2006

State Senator Malcolm Smith (D- Queens) today offered some tips to help drivers make it through the winter season accident and incident free. With hazardous road conditions and frigid weather to battle it is important that drivers have the necessary equipment to see them through to safety.

"Since the winter is here, it is important to remind people to make sure they have the necessary supplies and knowledge to help them through the winter in New York. Driving during the winter brings with it significant risks of the year and I want to ensure people are prepared," Senator Smith said.

The Queens lawmaker provided a checklist of items for drivers to carry when they head out on the road:

- Snow shovel
- Scraper with a brush
- Tow chain or strap
- Flashlight
- Abrasive material (cat litter, sand, salt or traction mats)
- Jumper cables

- Warning device (flares or reflective triangles)
- Sleeping bags or blankets, ski caps and mittens
- First-Aid supplies
- Compass

In addition to these supplies one must also be prepared to avoid accidents by understanding the unique challenges arising from driving in a winter storm.

"Winter driving can be very stressful for many drivers. Not only must you worry about the road conditions, but also all the other drivers on the road. Having all the proper supplies is not enough, we must also have a solid understanding of how to control our vehicle should we lose control or find ourselves in a precarious situation," Senator Smith said.

Slow down -- Driving slower is the single most important thing to remember when driving in the snow. Antilock brakes, stability systems or other vehicle control mechanisms will not help if you begin sliding off the road because of driving too fast on an icy surface.

Look ahead -- Many driving experts recommend keeping four car lengths between you and the driver ahead of you for every 10 mph you are travelling. This will ensure you have plenty of time to make the necessary adjustments to avoid an accident.

Apply brakes smoothly -- Also it is important to avoid any sudden movements with the steering wheel.

Avoid braking when trying to control a skid -- To turn effectively, take your foot off the gas and carefully adjust the steering wheel to restore grip.

"By using these valuable tips, I hope we can all avoid the senseless accidents that occur over the winter months. Remembering to drive slow and give ourselves the extra time to arrive at our destination is truly key," Senator Smith concluded.
