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Cold Weather Changes Demand Caution When Driving

DECEMBER 09TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri's weather forecast changes regularly, especially when winter is approaching. Depending on where you live in Missouri, the weather may be sunny, foggy, or include rain, hail, sleet, ice, or snow! The Missouri State Highway Patrol encourages motorists to plan ahead and drive safely or not at all during inclement weather. Winter weather will affect driving conditions and traffic patterns. Please remember to buckle up, stay alert, be courteous, and obey all traffic laws.

Section 304.012 RSMo. directs motorists to exercise the highest degree of care while driving on Missouri's roadways. When inclement weather hits, please adjust how you drive, so that you continue to "exercise the highest degree of care." For instance: Stopping quickly in the winter on snow-covered or icy roads is next to impossible. Use care by increasing your following distance as you drive. Ask yourself if the speed you're traveling is safe for the weather conditions. Slow down when driving in snow or on ice. Driving the speed limit may not be "exercising the highest degree of care" during inclement weather; driving over the speed limit never is.

Take time to make sure your vehicle is in good working condition before winter arrives and before you travel. The Missouri State Highway Patrol suggests keeping your fuel tank at least half full. Place an ice scraper, tire chains, battery booster cables, blankets, extra coats, gloves, water, non-perishable food, flashlight, and a bag of sand or cat litter in your trunk. Emergencies cannot be predicted, but planning ahead can help you if one should

arise. Missouri's Road Condition Report (1-888-275-6636) can help you plan your route--before you leave. You may also view MoDOT's Road Condition Map by going to the Patrol's website www.mshp.dps.mo.gov and clicking on the Road Condition icon. When road conditions become slick from ice and snow the Patrol encourages motorists to refrain from driving unless absolutely necessary.

Take the time to make sure the windows are completely cleared to ensure visibility. Clear your driveway so that your vehicle enters the roadway safely. Allow extra driving time for you to reach your destination at a slow, safe speed. Remember: Missouri law states if you're using your windshield wipers, your headlights must be turned on. It takes only a second to turn on your vehicle's headlights. That second could make you more visible to other drivers and prevent a traffic crash.

If you have a cell phone, make sure it's fully charged and with you when you travel. Please do not use your cell phone when you are driving; park your vehicle well off the roadway or in a parking lot before placing a call. The Missouri State Highway Patrol emergency number is 1-800-525-5555 (or *55 on a cellular phone). These numbers ring at the nearest troop headquarters.

The only 100 percent survivable traffic crash is the one that never happens. Make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained in a seat belt or child restraint. Every day as we travel on Missouri's roadways, we trust that every driver on the road is going to obey the speed limit, pay attention, and drive sober. "Don't Violate The Trust."

Press Release from Missouri Highway Patrol

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