

The threat of a winter storm sweeping across the Cornhusker State brings with it safe driving tips and reminders from the Nebraska State Patrol.

Motorists can keep up to date on the latest weather and travel conditions by utilizing 511, the state's automated road and weather condition information system. By dialing 511 from any landline or cellular phone, motorists will be able to gauge how the weather is affecting travel conditions.

The system can be accessed via the internet, through the Nebraska State Patrol web site at www.nsp.state.ne.us click on "511 Traveler Information" in the Quick Links box.

Travelers outside of Nebraska wanting to check weather and road conditions in the state can dial 1-800-906-9069.

As conditions change, motorists are reminded to adjust their speed and never travel faster than the conditions allow. Slick surfaces make it difficult to steer and stop. Do not drive in slick, wet snowy weather with your cruise control on.

Motorists are encouraged to give themselves plenty of time and distance to react to others around them. Remember slick spots can form in places you least expect. Be sure to exercise caution on bridges and overpasses.

Keep your headlights on and make sure they are cleaned off, so you can see and be seen.

Plan your trips carefully. Be sure to use well traveled routes and give yourself plenty of time to reach your destination. Let others know where you are going, when you will arrive, and what route you are taking.

If you do become stranded while traveling, stay with your car. Wind chill and freezing temperatures can be life threatening. If your vehicle does become stuck, keep a window cracked to prevent the build-up of carbon monoxide.

Be sure to include a winter weather survival kit in your vehicle as you travel. The following are some basic items to keep in your car in case you become stranded in wintry weather:

An emergency first aid kit Ice scraper, shovel, small bag of sand; three pound coffee can Matches and candles; blankets or sleeping bag; high energy or dehydrated foods; jumper cables; flashlights; battery operated radio; extra batteries (cold weather reduces battery strength); red flag or bandana (fasten to car to signal you are in trouble).