

Automotive Winter Survival Kit

Joseph Parish

Wintertime is quickly approaching in full force, and with its arrival we should be aware of the hazards and potential damage it can cause. It is imperative that with such weather conditions on the horizon that we prepare, and carry a "Winter Survival Kit" in each of our cars. This kit if properly composed could possibly save your life, or those of your families. Here is a short list of items you should have in the kit.

- A folding shovel
- Windshield scraper along with a small whisk broom
- Cranking flashlight so you do not have to worry about batteries dying
- A crank powered radio
- Several bottles of water
- Some sort of snack food such as energy bars, raisins or candy bars
- Matches and a few small candles, keep an empty tuna can inside the kit as well
- Keep extra hats, socks and gloves for each member of the family
- First aid kit and pocket knife
- Any necessary medications that family members may be on
- Several blankets
- Rope or tow chain
- Road salt, sand, or cat litter to place near the tires for traction
- Booster cables
- Emergency flares
- Fluorescent distress flag and whistle to attract attention
- Cell phone adapter to plug into lighter
- A suitable tote to contain all the supplies in

Store many of your essential items in the passenger compartment for immediate use just in case your vehicles trunk is frozen shut. All food should be kinds that can be eaten hot or cold. In the wintertime always keep your gas tank at least half full. If you are taking a trip in foal weather is sure to tell someone where you are heading, and the route which you intend to take. If you happen to get stuck along the road tie a florescent flag on your antenna or out the car window. If you are stuck at night try to keep your dome light on to help rescue crews find you. To reduce the drain on your car battery, use your emergency flashers only if you happen to hear an approaching vehicle. If you are not alone make certain that one person is awake at all times, and watching for help to arrive.

Always stay in your vehicle. If you decide to walk in a storm it is not only a dangerous decision to make, but you risk getting lost or exhausted. Vehicles represent a great form of shelter. Avoid any type of overexertion such as needless shoveling of snow, or attempting to push your car. Do not risk having a heart attack, or causing yourself injury. It is often better to be a little cold, but awake than it would be to maintain your

comfort, and be sleepy, and warm. Piled snow can plug up your cars exhaust system, and create a deadly carbon monoxide environment inside your car. Run the engine for only 10 minutes each hour, and ensure that the exhaust pipe is free of any snow accumulation. Keep a window open slightly while running the engine. You may not be comfortable, but you will be alive when help arrives.