



The Groundhogs Day Blizzard in February 2011 was caused by a severe winter storm that blanketed the Chicagoland area that halted commuters on Lake Shore Drive. Heavy snowfall and 70 mph winds coupled with blocked exit ramps resulted in gridlocked traffic for miles trapping some drivers for 12+ hours inside their vehicle. The same storm left downstate Illinois with over 100,000 100,000 customers across Illinois without power, dropping a foot or more snow in central and northern Illinois, and forming ice in southeastern Illinois.

According to the National Weather Service, on average, weather-related vehicle crashes kill 6,253 people nationwide. Overall in 2023, the US Department of Transportation cites 40,990 lives were lost on U.S. roads.

- Drive slowly and increase following distance in snowy/ice conditions
- Keep an emergency kit with blankets, flashlight, first aid supplies, snacks, and a phone charger
- Check tire pressure and tread depth regularly
- Clear all snow and ice from your vehicle before driving, including roof, hood, and lights
- Avoid sudden braking or acceleration
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent fuel lines freezing and provide extra weight for traction
- Ensure your vehicle is winter-ready with functioning heater, defroster, wipers, and a good battery
- Before leaving home, check the following:
 - Weather conditions / NWS forecasts / road conditions
 - Vehicle emergency preparedness kit
 - Let someone know your route and arrival times
- Avoid using cruise control and slowly approach intersections, ramps, and bridges
- Ice on roads can be treacherous, especially if they appear clear
- If stuck or stranded:
 - Call someone to tell them where you are and that you need help
 - Stay with your car
 - Clear the exhaust pipe to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
 - Run your vehicle just enough to stay warm

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