



MOVE

Truck driving: degrees and programs

from Northeast Community College

Learn the skills necessary to gain a Class A Commercial driver's license to operate a semi over the road in this six-week course.

The noncredit truck driving program teaches you the fundamentals of truck operation, safety and government regulations, and necessary

record keeping. During the program, students take the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles Commercial Driver's license exams. This program is approved for the training of veterans. Many employers require a criminal background check prior to employment.

Individuals with a criminal record may not be eligible for employment

in some settings.

You will earn a Certificate of Continued Learning upon successful completion of the course.

Students are trained in conventional tractor-trailer combination units with ten and thirteen speed transmissions. The number of students is limited to eight per class.

You must be 21 years of age

and have a valid driver's license. Students are also cautioned that the physical requirements for a Class A Commercial Driver License (required for truck-tractor operators) must be consistent with the standards of the United States Department of Transportation. The required drug/alcohol testing includes pre-admittance, random,

post accident, and reasonable suspicion testing.

Courses and Program Options Training

Financial assistance is available through the Community College GAP Assistance Program for students meeting income guidelines.

Program of Study

A. 190 contact hours of classroom and lab instruction covering such topics as: public and employer relations, accident procedures, extreme driving conditions, hazard perception, regulation agencies (DOT-CVSA-FMCSA), daily logs, fire-fighting, personal health and safety, trip planning, speed and space management, vehicle preventive maintenance, cargo handling and documentation, hazardous materials, basic control of vehicle, coupling and uncoupling, backing and shifting, concourse, city and two-lane highway driving, and other related topics including CDL training and testing.

B. 50 hours of driving (range and street), including accompanying instructor in truck cab and actual driving under supervision. Total of 240 contact hours.

Career Information

Professional truck driving ranks among the top professions in the number of job openings each year. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates indicate there will be about 259,900** job openings for drivers each year through 2031.

Salary Information

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2022, the mean wage for truck drivers in Nebraska is \$63,560 or \$30.56/hour. Some companies in the state pay more than \$80,000 for professional drivers.

How to stay active in winter

from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln,
by Alyssa Havlovic, MS, RDN, ACSM EP-C,
Extension Educator in Lancaster County

Being physically active is important year-round, but the cold, Nebraska winter months can present challenges when it comes to staying active. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week for adults and at least 60 minutes per day for children and adolescents.

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do to improve their health. However, only 20% of adults in the U.S. achieve the weekly guideline of 150 minutes of aerobic activity and two sessions of muscle-strengthening activity, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Make it a goal to move more and sit less. A healthy physical activity routine should consist of a variety of activities including aerobic exercise, strength training, flexibility and balance. Remember that some activity is better than none.

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The benefits of regular physical activity go well beyond weight management and weight loss. Physical activity can reduce your risk of several chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and eight types of cancer.

Being physically active can help lower your blood pressure and increase your HDL ("good") cholesterol.

Activity also improves your quality of sleep, improves your cognition, boosts your immune system and improves your overall quality of life. Regular physical activity can also improve your mental health and well-being. Individuals who are physically active are less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression and have improved self-image and confidence.

Health benefits of physical activity start immediately after exercising and everyone gains benefits, even people living with a chronic condition or a disability. Always consult your physician or healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise routine.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

If you are willing to brave the cold weather, walking is still a great activity to continue into the winter months. Be sure to dress appropriately and wear layers of clothing if you choose to be active outdoors. Start with a moisture-wicking fabric, then add a fleece layer with a water- and wind-proof layer over the top. Wear a hat and gloves for extra protection on cold days.

Other outdoor activities may include shoveling snow, ice skating or hiking. Sledding, building a snowman or snow fort, and snowball fights are all great ways to be active with your family outdoors on snowy days.

If you are not a fan of the cold weather, there

are plenty of options to stay active indoors. Create a space in your home for exercise. You may choose to purchase equipment such as dumbbells and resistance bands, or opt for activities that require no equipment at all such as body weight squats, push-ups, crunches or jumping jacks. (See below for a no-equipment-needed home workout!)

Several fitness professionals and fitness centers now offer free online at-home workouts. Use The American Heart Association, YouTube or other social media platforms to find a workout routine that suits your current fitness level. Try different types of exercise such as yoga, Zumba, pilates or HIIT (high-intensity interval training) to keep your workouts interesting and avoid burnout or boredom.

Other great activities for indoor physical activity include regular household chores like vacuuming and sweeping, or simply turning up the music and dancing to your favorite songs. When being active, choose activities you enjoy to help you keep physical activity as part of your daily routine all year long.

References:

- American Heart Association; <http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; <https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity>
- American Institute for Cancer Research; <http://www.aicr.org>

Winter weather driving tips are given

from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



Driving in Winter Weather

The Basics

Slow down. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. In fact, 2022 there were an estimated 153,620 police reported traffic crashes that occurred when there was snow/sleet conditions at the time of the crash. On the road, increase your following distance enough so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.

Don't crowd a snow plow or travel beside the truck. Snow plows travel slowly, make wide turns, stop often, overlap lanes, and exit the road frequently. If you find yourself behind a snow plow, stay far enough behind it and use caution if you pass the plow.

What to Do in an Emergency

If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, stay focused on yourself and your passengers, your car, and your surroundings.

Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.

Let your car be seen. Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light on.

Be mindful of carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure your exhaust

pipe is clear of any snow and run your car only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm. Don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.

Changes You May Notice

Tires

As the outside temperature drops, so does tire inflation pressure. Make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended inflation pressure, which is in your owner's manual and on a label located on the driver's side door frame. Do not inflate your tires to the pressure listed on the tire itself. That number is the maximum pressure the tire can hold, not the recommended pressure for the your vehicle.

Some other tips:

Inspect your tires at least once a month and before long road trips. It's best to check the tires when they're cold, meaning that they have not been driven on for at least three hours.

Check each tire's age. Some vehicle manufacturers recommend replacing tires every six years regardless of use.

An inspection is not just about checking tire pressure and age. Remember to check for any damage or conditions that may need attention, and check the spare tire, too. When checking the tread and sidewalls, look for any cuts, punctures, bulges, scrapes, cracks or bumps. You also want to look for the built-in wear bar indicators or use a quarter to help determine when it's time to replace your tires. For the quarter test insert a quarter into your tread groove. If the tread doesn't touch George Washington's head, you should think about replacing your tires. If you find tire damage, take your vehicle to a tire service professional.

Consider installing snow tires, but before buying new tires, visit NHTSA's Tires page to review tire safety ratings. The Uniform Tire Quality Grading System (UTQGS) lets you compare tire treadwear, traction performance, and temper-

ature resistance.

Car Seats

In colder weather, parents typically dress their children in winter coats. But it's important to know that heavy coats can interfere with the proper harness fit on a child in a car seat. When your child will be secured in a car seat, pick thin, warm layers, and place blankets or coats around your child after the harness is snug and secure for extra warmth.

Also, make sure car seats and booster seats are properly installed and that any children riding with you are in the right seat for their ages and sizes. See NHTSA's child passenger safety recommendations to find the right seat for your child's age and size. You can visit NHTSA's Child Car Seat Inspection Station Locator to find a free car seat inspection site near you, or to get information on virtual inspections.

Batteries

When the temperature drops, so does battery power. In cold weather, gasoline and diesel engines take more battery power to start, and electric and hybrid-electric vehicles' driving range can be reduced. Have a mechanic check your battery, charging system, belts, and for any other needed repairs or replacements.

Safety Technologies

Familiarize yourself with the safety technologies on your vehicle and how they perform in wintry conditions. Know whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system and learn how to use it properly. Antilock brake systems prevent your wheels from locking up during braking. If you have antilock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure to the brake pedal. If you don't have antilock brakes, you may need to pump your brakes if you feel your wheels starting to lock up. For more information on driver assistance technologies, visit NHTSA.gov/DriverAssistTech.

Floor Mats

Due to slushy winter conditions, you might consider switching out your usual floor mats for thicker material or rubbery ones. Improperly installed floor mats in your vehicle could interfere with the operation of the accelerator or brake pedal, increasing the risk of a crash. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for mat installation and use retention clips to secure the mats. Always use mats that are the correct size and fit for your vehicle.

Preparing Your Vehicle

Lights

Check your headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers and interior lights. Be sure to also check your trailer brake lights and turn signals, if necessary.

Windshield Wipers

You can quickly go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid in a single snowstorm. Make sure your vehicle's reservoir is full of high-quality "winter" fluid with de-icer before winter weather hits. Make sure defrosters and all windshield wipers work and replace any worn blades. Consider installing heavy-duty winter wipers if you live in an area that gets a lot of snow and ice.

Cooling System

Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle, and that it meets the manufacturer's specifications. See your vehicle owner's manual for recommendations. Check the cooling system for leaks, test the coolant, and drain or replace the old coolant.

You may also want to visit your mechanic for a tune-up and ask them to check for leaks, badly worn hoses, or other needed parts, repairs, and replacements.

Before You Go

Stock Your Vehicle

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving-related tasks, and supplies you might need in an emergency, including:

A snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper;

Abrasive material (sand or kitty litter), in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow;

Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices (flares and emergency markers);


First aid kit, including tourniquet;

Blankets for protection from the cold;

And a cell phone and charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine.

Gas Up or Plug It In

Keep your gas tank close to full whenever possible. Similarly, in the



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How to stay active in cold weather

from heart.org

When winter blows in, you can

Winter

(Continued from page 2)

case for electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, it is important keep your battery charged and to also minimize the drain on the battery. In general, batteries with liquid electrolyte have reduced energy storage and delivery capabilities at lower temperatures, which is why most all vehicle batteries use battery power for self-heating in low temperatures. The battery drain due to heating can be minimized by keeping your electric vehicle as warm as possible during freezing temperatures. A common way to do this is plugging your vehicle in at night during the winter — keeping the battery in its optimal temperature ranges.

Plan Your Route

Check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out. If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you do have to go out, make sure you are prepared in case you become delayed while traveling. If making a long road trip when winter weather is forecasted, consider leaving early or changing your departure to avoid being on the roads during the worst of the storm.

Familiarize yourself with directions and maps before you go—even if you use a GPS—and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time. On longer trips, plan enough time to stop to stretch, get something to eat, check your phone, and change drivers or rest if you feel drowsy.

Year-Round Safety

Check for Recalls

NHTSA's Recalls Look-up Tool lets you enter a vehicle identification number (VIN) to quickly learn if your vehicle has a critical safety issue that has not been repaired, and how to get that repair done for free. You can also download NHTSA's SaferCar app and enter your vehicle and equipment information. If a recall is issued, you'll get an alert on your phone.

Avoid Risky Driving Behaviors

You know the rules: Do not text or drive distracted; obey posted speed limits; and always drive sober. Both alcohol and drugs can impair safe and responsible driving by affecting things such as coordination, judgment, perception, and reaction time. And remember: always wear your seat belt.?

pull the blankets over your head and go back to sleep—or you can suit up and head out for an outdoor winter adventure!

There's no reason you need to take a break from physical activity when the temperature drops. In fact, exercising in cooler weather has some distinct advantages over working out in warmer weather.

Tips and benefits to keep in mind

There's no heat and humidity to deal with. Winter's chill might even make you feel awake and invigorated.

You may be able to work out longer in cold weather — which means you can burn even more calories.

It's a great way to take in the sunlight (in small doses). Not only can light improve many people's moods, it also helps you get some vitamin D.

Exercise boosts your immunity during cold and flu season. Just a few minutes a day can help prevent simple bacterial and viral infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Try these outdoor activities:

- Brisk walking or hiking
- Jogging or running
- Raking leaves
- Shoveling snow
- Ice skating
- Sledding
- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing

Stay warm, stay safe

Staying warm and dry when heading out to exercise in cold weather is all about layers. A little preparation can keep you safe from cold weather hazards like hypothermia and frostbite.

Cold temperatures, strong winds and damp conditions (like rain and

snow) can steal your body heat. For example, according to the National Weather Service, a 30-degree day with 30-mile-an-hour wind feels like about 15 degrees. And if you get wet (from rain, snow or perspiration) that effect is magnified. That's why layers of clothing are so important. They help trap the heat and form a kind of insulation against the elements.

Resist your instinct to start layering with cotton. Once cotton becomes wet with sweat or snow, the moisture is trapped and will make you feel colder and heavier. For your first layer, you want something that pulls moisture away from your skin, like the moisture wicking fabrics used in high-performance sportswear. Next, add a layer of fleece; top it off with a thin waterproof layer.

Know the signs

Hypothermia means the body temperature has fallen below 35 degrees Celsius or about 95 degrees Fahrenheit. It occurs when your body can't produce enough energy to keep the internal body temperature warm enough. It can kill you.

Symptoms can include:

- Lack of coordination
- Mental confusion
- Slowed reactions
- Slurred speech
- Cold feet and hands
- Shivering
- Sleepiness

Children and the elderly are at higher risk because they may have limited ability to communicate about symptoms or impaired mobility affects them even without hypothermia's symptoms and signs. Elderly people also may have lower

subcutaneous fat and a diminished ability to sense temperature, so they can suffer hypothermia without knowing they're in danger.

Stay hydrated

Don't forget to drink water when exercising in cooler weather. Thirst isn't the best indicator that you need to drink.

Bye-bye, couch potato!

When winter weather deters you from getting outside, don't just reach for the remote. Make your time inside count. There are many ways to get physical activity indoors — no gym required. Hand weights or resistance bands are a great addition, but not necessary. You can also wear a heavy backpack to add intensity to your workout.

Try these indoor activities:

- Home workout circuit
- Dancing
- Active housework such as vacuuming and sweeping
- Mall walking
- Bowling
- Roller skating
- Yoga or other fun group classes at your local gym, studio or community center
- Stair climbing

Fit in fitness

Follow the American Heart Association physical activity recommendations of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week to improve your quality of life. Move more, with more intensity, and sit less.

What if I'm recovering from a cardiac event or stroke?

Some people are afraid to exercise after a heart attack or stroke. But regular physical activity can help reduce your chances of having another heart attack or stroke.

The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association publish scientific statements that direct health care professionals to prescribe physical activity to heart and stroke patients since there is strong evidence that physical activity and exercise after a heart attack or stroke can improve cardiovascular fitness, walking ability and upper arm strength.

If you've had a heart attack or stroke, talk with your health care professional before starting any exercise to be sure you're following a safe, effective physical activity program.



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Safety tips offered as part of International Snowmobile Safety Week

The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, that unites all four snowmobile manufacturers, has developed the responsible snowmobiling program titled: Safe Riders! You make snowmobiling safe. All snowmobile associations/federations, clubs, affiliates, government administrators, and enthusiasts are encouraged to participate in the program.

So during International Snowmobile Safety Week, January 18-25, 2025 it's appropriate for all of us to remind ourselves about obeying applicable laws and rules, using good common sense, riding with care and control, and making smart choices.

Here are 10 tips that can make you a better rider and help you arrive home safely after every ride...

Know the Scenario
Like other motorized recreational activities, snowmobiling poses certain inherent risks. It occurs off-road in an unpredictable, uncontrollable, and wild natural setting, so each snowmobiler must always expect the unexpected, be prepared and avoid unnecessary risks.

Choose Your Time and Place
A defined organized trail may be available, but it's your choice whether to ride there or not. In a non-engineered setting, conditions change rapidly due to varying temperature, sudden storms, snow quality, terrain, heavy usage, or variables like drifts and fallen trees.

Choose Good Visibility
Just like with driving a car, your eyes provide most of the information your brain processes for good judgments and quick reactions while snowmobiling. But on the snow, many factors can severely limit your ability to see properly, including snow dust, white-outs,

heavy snow or freezing rain, sun glare, flat light or fog; fogging or icing of visor and/or eyeglasses, and darkness or over-riding your headlights.



The fact that everything's white can also hamper your usual depth perception or ability to identify or distinguish things quickly and easily. When visibility is less than optimal, it's up to you to decide whether to go or whether to continue.

Spread Out
Too often, a group of snowmobilers rides so close to each other that it looks as if their sleds were linked together like a freight train. Driving too close on the road is called tailgating, and is against the law because of the associated dangers. When tailgating, you are totally at the mercy of the person ahead—how fast that rider can react to whatever's ahead, and how fast you can react to that reaction. Tailgating jeopardizes your own ability to make a quick choice and cuts your reaction time, leaving you vulnerable to the actions of others. So keeping a safe distance from other riders is the smart choice.

Be Vigilant
While riding, it's important to practice 360° situational awareness. Simply put, you always need to know what's going on around you to be able to properly assess

your position and your next moves. Target fixation occurs when a rider's eyes become locked on one object ahead, to the exclusion of everything else. This semi-hypnotic state happens while tailgating, staring too long at one thing ahead, or if everything is white on white.

Being tired or impaired can play a role, too. Stay alert by moving your eyes around constantly and always checking around you, but if fixation persists take a break. When trail riding, you're also responsible for the rider behind you, and the easiest way to keep track is to use

mirrors.

Use Hand Signals
Snowmobilers developed and adopted a set of hand signals to inform following and oncoming riders of our intentions. Habitual use of the hand signals is both the courteous and responsible choice, so get in the habit of using them.

Keep Your Wits
Smart choices, good judgment, constant vigilance and sharp reactions are the four keys to snowmobiling without incident. It's a proven fact that alcohol and drugs impair each of these key driving functions, so keep your wits about you by making the personal choice not to drink or use drugs while sledding.

Keep Right
By choosing to deliberately and constantly keep your sled on the right side of the trail, you'll dramatically increase your chances of staying out of harm's way.

Stay on the Trail
Year after year, the statistics show that staying on the trail is safer than riding anywhere else. Yes, a trail is still a non-engineered, unpredictable place where anything can happen unexpectedly, but where an organized trail is available for riding, it's generally a smarter choice than venturing off-trail on fields or roads.

Know Before You Go
No ice is completely safe. If you

choose to cross anyway, you can reduce the personal risk you are accepting. Always cross in good visibility conditions, and try to follow a stake line and/or previously beaten track. Spread the sleds in your group out slightly more than usual, so that riders behind have additional reaction time if someone ahead gets into difficulty. Don't stop until you reach the far shore, and then regroup to ensure that everyone made it across safely.

Never cross alone. If you stray off the hard pack, you run a greater risk of encountering slush, hidden obstacles, ice huts, pressure ridges, thin ice, or even open water. Keep a sharp eye out for ice heaves and ice roads. Above all, know before you go!

Be Prepared
The best plans will have you prepared in the event that an incident occurs. You can help ensure your personal safety with preparations like filing a ride plan before leaving home, carrying a reliable communications device and a personal tracking unit, always riding with an emergency/survival kit, and packing spare parts and a tow rope.

Many of the safety tips are all about being prepared to the best of your ability, and then to remember to have fun while riding within your capabilities—and not letting peer pressure lure you into poor choices.

Know Before You Go
No ice is completely safe. If you

waters that were not infested. No new infestations were identified this year.

"The public is our greatest ally against zebra mussels, and we need people to be on the lookout this fall and report sightings when they see them," Paugels said. "Nebraskans can keep our waters clean and free of harmful invasive species."

Report any zebra mussel sightings to the Nebraska Game and Parks Aquatic Invasive Species Program at 402-471-7602 or ngpc_ais@nebraska.gov.

More information on zebra mussels and other invasive species can be found at OutdoorNebraska.gov/aquaticinvasivespecies.



Boat, dock, lift owners asked to check for zebra mussels

As cold weather approaches and Nebraskans remove their watercraft, docks, and other boating equipment from the water, Nebraska Game and Parks encourages boat owners to check their equipment for zebra mussels.

Zebra mussels are highly invasive, and when introduced into a water body can cause millions of dollars in damage to infrastructure and catastrophically effect ecosystems and agricultural areas.

"Many boaters already are on the lookout for zebra mussels, but it's important that every Nebraskan check their equipment for attached mussels so we're informed about new infestations and can respond quickly," said Jena Paugels, Nebraska Game and Parks Aquatic Invasive Species Program biologist. "This is our last weapon against zebra mussels before winter begins and their reproductive season ends."

Adult mussels are a D-shaped clam with light and dark bands on their shells, usually no larger than a sunflower seed. These mussels adhere to solid surfaces, including woods and metals.

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What to consider before purchasing e-bikes for children

Bicycles have long been a popular mode of transportation. Cycling is fun and a great form of exercise, and riding a bike is better for the environment than driving a car or riding in other gas-powered vehicles.

Propelled by the long-standing popularity of bicycle transportation, electronic bikes, also known as "e-bikes," have rapidly gained steam among adolescents and even adults in recent years. E-bikes look like regular bikes, but they feature an electric motor and a rechargeable battery. HealthyChildren.org says some e-bikes have a motor

that only works when the rider is pedaling, while others include a throttle that enables the rider to use the bike whether he or she is pedaling or not. E-bikes can reach speeds between 20 and 28 miles per hour.

Although they can be exciting and convenient, e-bikes can be hazardous. According to Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC), there has been a steady rise in pediatric injuries related to e-bikes. Common injuries include concussions, extremity fractures, skull fractures, and facial fractures. Such injuries can occur by falling off the

e-bike, by colliding with an object while riding, or after being struck by a car. Sometimes pedestrians are injured after they are struck by an e-bike.

E-bikes, although motorized, are not presently classified as motor vehicles. In addition, the regulations regarding who can ride them vary depending on where one lives. Regulations vary depending on whether the e-bike is class 1, 2 or 3. The e-bike industry has grown rapidly, and safety regulations have not kept pace. It was only after dozens of dangerous e-bike fires in New York City that calls for standard UL



certifications increased.

Parents may wonder if they should let their children ride e-bikes. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that children between the ages of nine and 12 should not operate any product that travels faster than 10 miles per hour, including e-bikes. Parents may not realize that e-bikes are quite heavy, with some weighing in at 60 pounds. That can make e-bikes challenging for small kids to maneuver.

When considering e-bikes, prospective riders must take note of the following safety guidelines.

- Slower is better. Choose an e-bike that has the lowest maximum speed. Never rig an e-bike to go faster.
- Wear a helmet. No matter the age of a rider, all should wear helmets with the chin straps fastened. The same goes when riding a traditional bike, scooter, etc.

• Do not ride with a passenger. Passengers increase the risk of crashing, so riders should never ask friends to ride with them.

• Follow the rules of the road. E-bikes, along with manual bicycles, are governed by the same rules of the road that motorized vehicles must follow. Ride on the correct side of the road and in the same direction as traffic. Stop at all intersections and respect traffic lights and road signs.

• Charge e-bikes while present. E-bike batteries can cause fires and there have been various instances of exploding batteries. Always be present when charging an e-bike battery. Never do so while sleeping or out of the house, and only use the recommended charger.

Adults may have to give pause to the idea of an e-bike for their children. Although wildly popular, e-bikes may not be appropriate for all riders.

Six most common bad winter driving habits

from the Nebraska Department of Transportation

Winter conditions bring a lot of special challenges and potential danger. Unfortunately, each winter we see many drivers in a situation where travelers find themselves involved in accidents that could have been prevented had safe habits been in place. Here



are some of the most common bad habits or trends I have noticed drivers repeating over the years, which often can lead to accidents. When crashes happen, it makes life difficult for other motorists, and escalates the risk to those who provide public safety functions on our highways.

Failing to react soon enough to trouble ahead

Drivers often ignore inclement conditions and underestimate the time/distance they will need to stop. So, what is excessive? Its not the same for every motorist. Its based on the type of vehicle being driven, its condition, the drivers experience and abilities and their condition. No two drivers are equal in their abilities to operate similar vehicles in winter conditions, adjustments in traveling speed, following distance are necessary for each on the many conditions seen for winter driving.

Excessive speed for the conditions

Leads to loss of traction, in commercial vehicles this creates jackknives, loss of control and crashes. For cars and pick-ups single vehicle or multivehicle crashes. Mix this with semi-truck commercial vehicles, you have a possibility of a significant crash and road blockage.

Driving in a fatigued condition

Winter driving is more stressful and more tiring than driving in good weather conditions. Long distance drivers need to learn to recognize when to stop for the day sooner. These making long commutes at the end of a work shift might be better off sheltering in the community at the end of the workday and eliminating the commute.

Failing to anticipate or notice changing road/weather conditions

Many single vehicle run-off accidents occur when drivers fail to anticipate changes in the road condition. They continue to drive in the same way as if the conditions were good. Reduced traction and reduced visibility are the two changes that contribute to most wintertime run off the road crashes. Prepare yourself before you drive by understanding the road conditions on your route and what's forecasted for it.

Not maintaining sufficient following distance

Drivers often make the mistake of assuming the amount of following distance they use in an urban environment in summer, will work just as well in the winter. Triple this distance. A driver must significantly increase following distance to account for the increase stopping distance that will be needed whenever a stop is required. Slow Down, increase your following distance. Resist the urge to pass the vehicle ahead of you.

Continuing to drive when conditions are unsafe to do so

Road conditions can worsen quickly. Drivers should know the limitations their vehicle has and their ability to drive in inclement weather, then take extra care to know as best as they can what the forecast conditions are for the trip ahead. If their winter driving experience is beyond their driving comfort or the conditions are deteriorating to the point where further driving is unsafe, it is advisable to find the nearest safe place to park to wait for conditions to improve.

Replacing these bad habits with safe habits can go a long way toward making our roads safer for travel in winter conditions. NDOT cares about good driver behavior and wants motorists to arrive safely at their destinations.

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Fifteen holiday travel tips for a less stressful festival season

By Stacey Leasca

See that twinkle on your neighbor's roof? Can you hear the soft sound of sleigh bells ringing in the distance and smell the distinct scent of pine wafting through the air? Yes, dear reader, the holidays are almost here, which means it's also time for you to plan out all your holiday travels.

Traveling during the holidays can almost certainly bring plenty of joy. After all, it usually means you're off to see your loved ones or heading to the vacation destination of your dreams to end the year right. But so are millions of other people, which can make for a rather stressful travel experience in airports, train stations, and on the road. But fear not — we're here to help. Here are 15 holiday travel tips that will make for a more joyful season.

Set price alerts and book flights early.

If you're planning to fly for the holiday season, you better get a move on because ticket prices are likely only going up from here. As Travel + Leisure previously reported, the typical prime time to book flights for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays is usually in September. However, we aren't really living in typical times now, are we? That said, it's still a good idea to book ASAP. And if for some reason you're still not convinced that now is the time to buy, try setting up price alerts on sites like Skyscanner, then click "buy" when the price is right for you.

Don't forget to book your rental car ahead of time.

Car rental prices are only going up, too. Cars are a finite resource, and everyone wants one during the holidays. In fact, in September 2021, Kayak noted that holiday car rental searches were up 243% compared to 2020, so you can only imagine that people are already searching (and booking) for Thanksgiving and Christmas right this second. Make

sure to grab your necessary vehicle before it's gone.

Be flexible on dates (and airports).

Remaining a little fluid with your holiday plans can really pay



off. Having the ability to leave for your trip a day or two earlier and return a day early or late could help you save big on airfare as you have a little more flexibility on picking a less crowded day to fly. One more way to keep costs down when flying? Picking a smaller airport nearby rather than a main hub. For example, you could try flying into Long Beach Airport or Van Nuys rather than Los Angeles International Airport. Smaller airports tend to have less demand, thus lower prices.

Consider less-visited destinations.

If you're visiting family or friends, you can't change where they live, so ignore this tip. However, if you're thinking of setting off on vacation, try broadening your horizons. Looking for some fun in the sun over the holidays? Rather than going to notoriously popular destinations like Cabo, try heading out of town for slightly fewer crowds and potentially more affordable options. For example, you could head to the equally alluring Todos Santos, just an hour away from Cabo. There, you'll find a slower pace in a town with more Bohemian

flair, and plenty of vacation rental options for you and your crew to keep costs down, including this gorgeous two-bedroom home with a private pool for just \$181 a night.

The same goes for winter ski destinations. Forgo the big ski mountains for smaller spots that may not come with all the bells and whistles but still have all the powder stashes you're truly after.

Book with points.

The holidays are the ideal time to use those points you've been racking up all year long on your credit card. And we know you've likely got points waiting because, as a rather shocking Lending Tree study showed, a whopping 70% of U.S. rewards credit card holders have unused rewards in the form of either cash back, points, or miles. You've earned those points. Use them now to feel less of a pinch this year on your holiday travel spending.

Try to book direct flights.

We're heading into winter, which means we're also heading into an unpredictable season that could come with snowstorms and delays. Try to always book direct flights to lessen your chances of missing a connection along the way. And if you're in close enough proximity to your destination, forgo planes altogether and opt for a train or bus instead.

Splurge on lounge access.

As we've mentioned several times here already, airports can be one of the most stress-inducing places. You should get to the airport at least two hours in advance of your flight, but know that you may have extra time to wait around. Rather than trying to find a seat in the crowd, use this as your excuse to splurge on lounge access. Lounge access usually comes included in first-class flights. However, those in economy can upgrade to purchase lounge access, or they can check their credit card to see if lounge access comes as an included perk.

Better yet, try Priority Pass, a yearly service that can help you get access to some of the best airport lounges.

If you can, only pack carry-on luggage.

Losing a checked bag, to put it bluntly, sucks. Now, imagine losing a checked bag that's filled with all the gifts you so diligently purchased for your nieces, nephews, aunts, grandparents, and more. If you can live without a few items, it's a good idea to only pack a carry-on to reduce your chances of losing anything along the way. Plus, you'll be able to leave the airport faster because you won't have to wait forever at the baggage carousel.

Be cautious with your gift wrapping.

If you're traveling with gifts, leave them unwrapped. If for some reason your wrapped gift raises any red flags with the TSA, they will be forced to unwrap it at security, undoing all your hard work. You could also avoid this hassle altogether by shipping your gifts ahead of time instead.

Have a backup plan in case things go wrong.

It's Murphy's Law. Everything that can go wrong, will. That's why it's a good idea to have backups on backups for your holiday planning. This starts with opting in for travel insurance. Travel insurance can be purchased through airlines, or can be purchased via various providers. Check out all the options — including "cancel for any reason" policies and standard options that cover everything from canceled flights to lost baggage — and find the one that fits your needs. Also, check with your credit card provider to see if it's already included in your purchase. Next, try to create an alternate route to your destination. Flight canceled? See how far the drive is, check bus and train routes, or have an entirely different plan B option for your holiday celebration (like a staycation), so you don't feel like you're missing out.

If you're driving,

make sure to get a tune-up.

Driving in the winter can be just as tough as flying. Not only do you have to think about the various weather patterns, but you also have to contend with millions of others making the drive too. And the last thing you need is your vehicle breaking down at an inopportune time. Make sure to get a quick tune-up before hitting the road, and try to avoid these 10 other road trip mistakes along the way.

Make use of all the apps.

You know what's great about living in the 21st century? All. The.

Apps. This holiday season, make use of every app in your phone's arsenal — from your airline's app to your favorite streaming platforms (Netflix, Hulu, HBO, etc.), along with map apps to keep you on track. Download movies, add your flight info to your phone's wallet, and keep directions handy so you're prepared for everything and stay entertained even on long-haul flights.

Check the opening hours at your destination's attractions.

You're not the only one on holiday break. So too are hospitality and attraction workers. Before heading off to your must-see destinations, take note of holiday hours. Often businesses will have condensed hours or closed days to ensure their staff gets time with their families too.

And make reservations at all the restaurants you plan to visit.

We've said it before and will say it again: You have to plan ahead for the holiday season. That applies to restaurants too. Have a spot you're dying to try? Make reservations for the holiday season as soon as they open so you have a guaranteed place to eat.

Be ready to tackle stress and spread joy instead.

Hopefully, all that preparation will help keep you calm this holiday season. If you need a little help relaxing, try downloading a few meditation apps to use during your journey. This way, you can breathe through any stress and anxiety and focus on staying positive for yourself, your family, and all your fellow travelers just trying to get to their destinations.

Five facts about snowmobiles

1. It is a \$22 million business
In the United States alone, snowmobiling is a \$22 million business.
2. Marked trails exist
There are about 230,000 miles of marked snowmobiling tracks in the United States.
3. It is also called Ski-Doo
Snowmobiles are also called Ski-Doos.
4. The snowmobiling world record
The greatest distance traveled in a snowmobile is 2,081 miles.
5. Snowmobiles can travel on water
In the right conditions and speed, snowmobiles can be used on the surface of the water.

are you ready?
Winter weather is here

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- * Check your brakes
- * Check your tire pressure
- * Make sure heater, defroster & windshield wipers work properly

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Why it's important to wash your car

The first things to come to mind when many people ponder vehicle maintenance are oil changes and routine tune-ups. Though each of those things are vital components of automotive maintenance, it's important that drivers recognize the value of a thorough car wash as well.

Drivers may see a car wash as a way to make their car look good, and that's not untrue. An effective car wash can give a car a look that mirrors how the vehicle appeared the moment it was driven off the lot.

But an effective wash is more than just cosmetic. According to

Consumer Reports, a thorough car wash removes grit and residue, thus protecting the car's paint job and reducing the likelihood of corrosion. Though late model vehicles aren't as susceptible to rust, fading and peeling as cars made decades ago, they still need a thorough and routine wash to remove dirt, grime and bird droppings that, over time, can adversely affect the paint job and, if left unchecked, eat away at the metal.

Another benefit to routine car washes is they can prevent damage related to seasonal issues. For example, individuals who live in regions where winter snowfall



But it's not just the exterior of the car that can benefit from routine washing. When taking their cars to get washed, many motorists pay a little extra to have their vehicle interiors cleaned. Sometimes referred to as "interior detailing," cleaning the cabin of the car helps to maintain the interior so it looks new longer. Routine interior cleaning also can remove dust and other particles that can serve as irritants if allowed to build up over time.

Resale and trade-in value is another factor to consider. The automotive experts at Edmunds note that the average transaction price for a used vehicle was \$25,410, which marks a 21 percent increase over the year prior. By taking care of a vehicle's interior, drivers are putting themselves in position to capitalize on the increased reliance on the preowned market. Prospective buyers, whether they're private citizens or dealerships, will see more value in a vehicle with a well-maintained interior than one with a cabin that's seen much better days.

Car washes may be seen as a purely cosmetic form of vehicle maintenance. But the benefits of routine and thorough car washes extend far beyond aesthetic appeal.

Statistics shared on teen drivers

Teen drivers ages 19 and younger represented 5.2% of all licensed drivers in Nebraska; (includes all Learner's Permit (LPD), School Permit (SCP), and Provisional Operator Permit (POP).

parents/guardians and the teen driver. Parents/guardians play a big role in keeping their teen safe behind the wheel and on the road. Teens with involved parents/guardians are:

30 percent less likely to use a cell phone while driving and significantly less likely to drive with multiple passengers. (Source: CHOP - Children's Hospital of Philadelphia).

The statistics show that teens learn to drive by example, meaning how you drive will directly affect how your teen drives. For more information on Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) and helpful tools, visit Nebraska DMV.

Zero Tolerance – Nebraska .02 Law

The Nebraska .02 law or "zero tolerance law" is a law to prevent minors from drinking and driving. Under the law, minors (defined as anyone under age 21) are prohibited from driving with more than .02 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath.

The .02 "zero tolerance" law makes it unlawful for anyone under age 21 to have a measurable amount of alcohol in their body while driving on Nebraska roadways.



Recent statistics note that 78% of the 18 teen traffic fatalities (drivers and passengers, ages 13-19) were NOT wearing seat belts.

- Nebraska teen drivers (ages 19 & younger) were involved in:
- 14% of all reported crashes;
- 25% of crashes between 9 p.m. and midnight;
- 14% of crashes between midnight and 3 a.m.;
- 31% of crashes using a cell phone;
- 22% of "speed related" crashes;
- 19% of "failure to yield" crashes;
- 28% of all single-vehicle rollover crashes;
- 19% of crashes due to "road conditions" (snow, ice, water);
- 26% of rear-end type collisions;
- 11% of alcohol-involved crashes.

- Twice as likely to use their seat belt,
- 70 percent less likely to drink and drive,
- Half as likely to speed,

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Advice offered for flying with children

The safest place for your child under the age of two on a U.S. airplane is in approved child restraint system (CRS) or device, not on your lap. Your arms aren't capable of holding your in-lap child securely, especially during unexpected turbulence, which is the number one cause of pediatric injuries on an airplane.

The FAA strongly urges you to secure your child in an approved CRS or other approved device for the entirety of your flight. Buying a ticket for your child is the only way to guarantee that you will be able to use a CRS. It's the smart and right thing to do so that everyone in your family arrives safely at your destination.

A CRS is a hard-backed child safety seat that is approved by the government for use in both motor vehicles and aircraft. FAA controls the approval of some but not all CRS. Additional information is available in FAA guidance and on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website.

Not all car seats are approved for use in airplanes. Make sure your CRS is approved by the U.S. government and has "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft" printed on it or is approved by a foreign government and bears the required label or marking.

Read the user's manual to confirm that your CRS can be secured properly in an airplane seat. Otherwise, you may be asked to

check the CRS as baggage.

Installing a CRS on an Airplane

A CRS must be installed in a forward-facing aircraft seat, according to manufacturer's instructions. This includes placing the CRS in the appropriate forward-facing or aft-facing direction as indicated on the device label for the size of the child.

The FAA prohibits passengers from using booster seats or backless CRS during ground movement, take-off and landing.

FAA-Approved Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES)

The Child Aviation Restraint System ("CARES", manufactured by AmSafe®, is FAA-certified for children who are up to 40 inches tall and who weigh between 22 and 44 pounds. The device is for those who are capable of sitting upright alone in a forward-facing position and who occupy their own seat. This supplemental restraint is used with the existing aircraft seatbelt for improved child safety. CARES is lightweight and adjusts to fit virtually all economy-, business-, and first-class airline seats. This type of device provides an alternative to using a hard-backed CRS. CARES is approved for use during all phases of flight—movement on the surface (taxi), take-off, landing, and turbulence, and is approved only for use on aircraft, but not for use in motor vehicles. If you're using a CARES device, make sure it has "FAA Approved in Accordance with 14 CFR 21.8(d), Approved for Aircraft

Use Only" or "FAA Approved in Accordance with 14 CFR 21.305(d), Amd 21.50 6-9-1980, Approved for Aircraft Use Only" on it.

Tips for Parents

Make sure your CRS or device is approved for use on airplanes.

Measure the width of your CRS. It should fit in most airplane seats if it is no wider than 16 inches.

Ask your airline for a discounted fare. Buying a ticket for your child is the only way to guarantee that you will be able to use a CRS.

Reserve adjoining seats. A CRS must not block the escape path in an emergency. Many airlines have policies that require a CRS to be placed in a window seat. Do not

place a CRS in an exit row.

Arrange for your airline to help you if you need help making a connecting flight. Carrying a CRS, a child, and luggage through a busy airport can be challenging.

Pack a bag of toys and snacks to keep your child occupied during the flight.

Always use a CRS when driving to and from the airport.

Wear your seat belt at all times.

A CRS must be installed in a forward-facing aircraft seat, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. This includes placing the CRS in the appropriate forward- or aft-facing direction as indicated on the label for the size of the child.

Lap Children

Although children who have not reached their second birthday are permitted to travel as lap children, the FAA strongly discourages this practice and recommends that you secure your child in an approved CRS in their own seat for the entire flight. While there is no regulatory prohibition from using a booster seat or harness vest (or other non-approved devices) for a lap child during the cruise portion of the flight only, airlines have policies which may or may not allow the use of those devices. Check with your airline.

Motorcycle facts are shared

Editor's note: The following information was obtained from the Nebraska Department of Transportation and includes the last information provided by the agency.

The number of motorcyclists killed in crashes in 2020 was 5,579. This is the highest number of motorcyclists killed since FARS started in 1975 and a 11% increase from 2019. Per vehicle miles traveled in 2020, motorcyclist fatalities occurred nearly 28 times more frequently than passenger car occupant fatalities in traffic crashes.

To keep everyone safe, we urge drivers and motorcyclists to share the road and be alert, and we're reminding motorcyclists to make themselves visible, to use DOT-compliant motorcycle helmets, and to always ride sober.

Motorcycle deaths make up about 15 percent of all highway deaths each year in the United States. However, motorcycles only make up about 3 percent of all registered vehicles. We can link motorcycle crashes to several causes:

- Lack of basic riding skills
- Not using special precautions
- Not following speed limits
- Not wearing a helmet. Helmets reduce deaths in crashes by about 37 percent.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has estimates that the effectiveness of helmets in preventing fatalities is 37 percent for rider and 41 percent for passengers.

Unhelmeted motorcyclists are three times more likely to suffer traumatic brain injuries than helmeted riders in a crash.

In Nebraska, a study on hospital costs for injured motorcyclists showed a decline in total acute

medical charges of 38% after a helmet law was implemented.

Studies show unhelmeted riders involved in crashes are less likely to have insurance and more likely to have higher hospital costs than helmeted riders in similar crashes (NHTSA).

All states who have weakened or repealed helmet laws have experienced an increase in fatality rates.

According to the October 2022 NASIS survey of 8,000 Nebraskans conducted by UNL BOSR: "81% indicated the Nebraska law requiring motorcycle helmets should be continued; 11.7% indicated it should be repealed; 7% had no opinion."

Less than 1% of licensed Nebraska motorcyclists are under the age of 21 (2021 State Data).

Motorcycle Helmets Associated with Lower Risk of Cervical Spine Injury: Debunking the Myth - 2010 by the American College of Surgeons

Of the motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes in 2020, 36% were riding without valid motorcycle licenses. (NHTSA)

Motorist Awareness

Safe riding practices and cooperation from all road users will help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on our nation's highways. But it's especially important for drivers to understand the safety challenges faced by motorcyclists such as size and visibility, and motorcycle riding practices like downshifting and weaving to know how to anticipate and respond to them. By raising motorists' awareness, both drivers and riders will be safer sharing the road.

Motorcycle License and Law Information

In order to operate a motorcycle on the highways in Nebraska,

all operators must have a Class M (motorcycle) license or Class M endorsement on a regular operator's license. Just having a regular Class O (operators) license does not allow an individual to operate a motorcycle; Nebraska state law requires a Class M license or Class M endorsement. Click here to view the Nebraska Motorcycle Operator Manual.

No person shall operate a moped unless the person has a valid Class O operator's license or a valid school/learner's permit.

Did you know?

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates that motorcycle helmets are 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries in motorcycle accidents and 37 percent effective in preventing deaths.

Despite that, many states do not mandate that all riders wear helmets when riding their motorcycles. The Insurance Information Institute reports that only 17 states and the District of Columbia require all riders to wear helmets when riding their motorcycles.

Many states require riders 17 and younger to wear helmets whenever they're riding their motorcycles. Laws are somewhat more uniform in Canada, where all motorcycle riders, including passengers, are required to wear helmets at all times. However, each province and territory in Canada is free to specify the standards a helmet must meet to comply with the law.

Anyone planning to travel through Canada and/or the United States on a motorcycle should consult the laws in areas they plan to visit to ensure they're in compliance with local laws at all times.

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