



# WINTER ROAD

SAFETY INFORMATION

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Winter road systems in Manitoba are temporary routes to remote northern communities. In many respects, they are lifelines for northern residents. Used short periods each winter, they allow people in isolated communities to buy fuel, building materials and food supplies they need to last an entire year.

Winter roads rely on cold weather. A few degrees on the thermometer can mean the difference between a safe trip and one that ends in disaster. It is wise to be prepared. Here are some important considerations:

## DO NOT TRAVEL ON CLOSED WINTER ROADS

This is by far the most important rule of winter road travel. Winter roads are closed when they are unsafe to use. No one inspects or maintains closed winter roads. If you are stranded, help could be a long time coming. Your vehicle may be unsalvageable if you become stranded on a closed road. You may quickly find yourself in severe danger.

## DRIVE SAFE

Drive according to the road conditions. Winter roads are very slippery. You must be able to control your vehicle, slow down or stop safely at all times. Hazards are many. Wild animals cross roadways. Roads follow the natural terrain. Bumps, hills and blind curves should be no surprise. Don't let oncoming traffic and slow-moving construction equipment surprise you, either.

## BE POLITE

In a snowy landscape, travelling by moonlight at night can actually increase your visibility because headlights reflect for great distances. Always dim your lights for approaching traffic. It is extremely important that vehicles travelling past each other slow down to avoid making the roadway disappear in a cloud of swirling snow. If you see someone in trouble – do what you can to help – lives may be at stake.

## KEEP CENTRED, KEEP MOVING, LEAVE SPACE

Always drive just right of centre on a winter road. Ice can be significantly weaker near snow banks at roadsides, because snow adds weight while it insulates the ice from cold air that keeps it frozen hard. Do not park a vehicle or store shipped goods on the ice. If others follow your example, it could cause an ice failure. Commercial truck traffic crossing ice in the same direction should stay a kilometre apart.

## **SLOW DOWN FOR ICE, STOP FOR WATER**

Seasoned winter road truckers limit their speed on ice to 15 kilometres per hour. They know a fast-moving vehicle can build a wave under the ice that can break the ice in front of them when it strikes a shoreline, sandbar or hits a wave from a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction. Drivers of smaller vehicles should keep this in mind and move over for commercial truck traffic, always maintaining the ability to slow down or stop safely. It is particularly important to slow down when approaching a shoreline to avoid cracking the ice. If you see water on the ice or on the land, do not proceed, as it may mean trouble.

## **ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE WHEN YOU EXPECT TO ARRIVE**

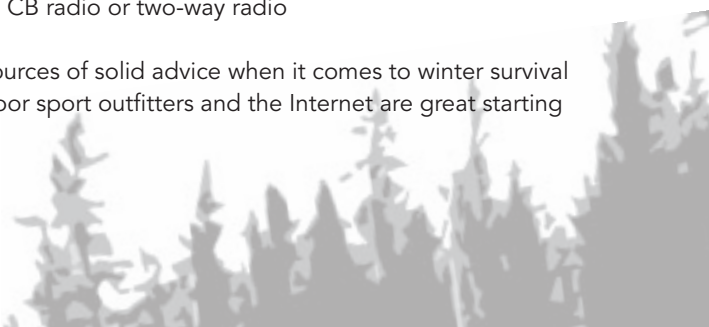
Before you leave, make sure someone will expect you at your destination, so that he/she will call for help if you do not arrive when you should.

## **PREPARE FOR THE WORST, EXPERIENCE THE BEST**

If you are not experienced, your first winter road trip should be with someone who is. Conditions can change quickly. Make sure you are ready for whatever comes your way. Any delay or breakdown can quickly become life threatening. Carry adequate personal medication and enough fuel to reach your destination. Pack winter survival equipment like:

- winter clothing and blankets (ex: parka, mitts, tuque, boots, underwear, sunglasses)
- basic camping equipment (ex: matches, candles, flashlight, axe, toilet paper)
- emergency food supplies (ex: hot-pac meals, nuts, granola bars, chocolate, tea bags)
- tools for vehicle repairs (booster cables, jack, tow rope, shovel, gas line antifreeze)
- satellite phone, CB radio or two-way radio

There are many sources of solid advice when it comes to winter survival equipment. Outdoor sport outfitters and the Internet are great starting places.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS

Be reminded you are responsible to report to Manitoba Environment at 944-4888 any environmental accidents like fuel spills, chemical leaks or fires involving hazardous materials. You are also responsible for arranging the immediate cleanup of dangerous goods.

When driving winter roads, you may be exempt under permit from Driver Hours of Service Regulation 193/89, but you must still maintain a 24-hour logbook and rest when fatigued.

Secure all loads with proper equipment. Use extra fasteners to reduce the likelihood of load movement on the uneven, slippery surfaces of winter roads.

Never exceed 15 kilometres per hour on ice in a vehicle weighing more than 7,000 kilograms.

Consult the Manitoba Permit Section at 945-3961 for permission when hauling oversized or overweight loads.

Beware of overhead wires and other restrictions.

Drive with caution in communities. Many residents may not realize there is commercial truck traffic in their community.

You are responsible for removal of any vehicle you abandon or garbage you produce.

### QUESTIONS ABOUT DRIVING WINTER ROADS?

Need to know current road conditions? Call the 24-hour highways information line at 204-945-3704 or toll-free 1-877-627-6237, or visit <http://www.manitoba.ca/mit/winter/index.html>

