



COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT FOR INJURY PREVENTION COORDINATORS

WINTER DRIVING

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Toolkit Overview

- **Purpose:** This toolkit equips healthcare professionals, injury prevention coordinators, and community educators with ready-to-use messaging and communication materials to promote safe driving during winter months. It supports efforts to prevent motor vehicle crashes, reduce weather-related injuries, and increase public awareness of common winter driving hazards.
- **Target Audience:** General public (drivers of all ages), parents and caregivers, teen drivers and young adults, older adults, rural and suburban communities with high winter road use

Key Messages

1. Slow down and increase following distance
2. Watch for black ice
3. Prepare your vehicle before you go
4. Clear all the snow and ice before driving
5. Plan ahead and avoid unnecessary travel during severe weather

Messaging Framework

- **Problem Statement:** Winter weather creates hazardous driving conditions that lead to thousands of crashes every year. Reduced visibility, slippery roads, and poorly maintained vehicles increase the risk of injury.
- **Emotional Appeal**
 - Families depend on safe roads. A few minutes of preparation can prevent crashes and save lives.
- **Action Steps**
 - Reduce speed and keep extra distance.
 - Stay alert for black ice.
 - Maintain your vehicle.
 - Clear all snow and ice.
 - Carry an emergency kit (blanket, flashlight, scraper, phone charger, water, etc.).
- **Supporting Facts**
 - It takes up to 10 times longer to stop on icy roads.
 - Nearly 25% of weather-related crashes occur on snowy, slushy, or icy pavement.
 - Black ice is most common at dawn, dusk, and overnight.
- **Tone**
 - Clear, calm, supportive, and actionable. Use short, direct statements and emphasize preparation.

All materials in this toolkit are developed by the American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) and may be adapted with credit for local use.

Outreach Tools

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

- **Sample radio script (15-30 seconds)**

15 Seconds

SFX: Wind gust + tire crunch on snow

Narrator: Winter roads are unpredictable. Slow down, watch for black ice, and leave extra room to stop. Before every trip, clear your car and check your tires. Stay safe this winter—drive smart and arrive alive.

Tag: A message from the American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division.

30 Seconds

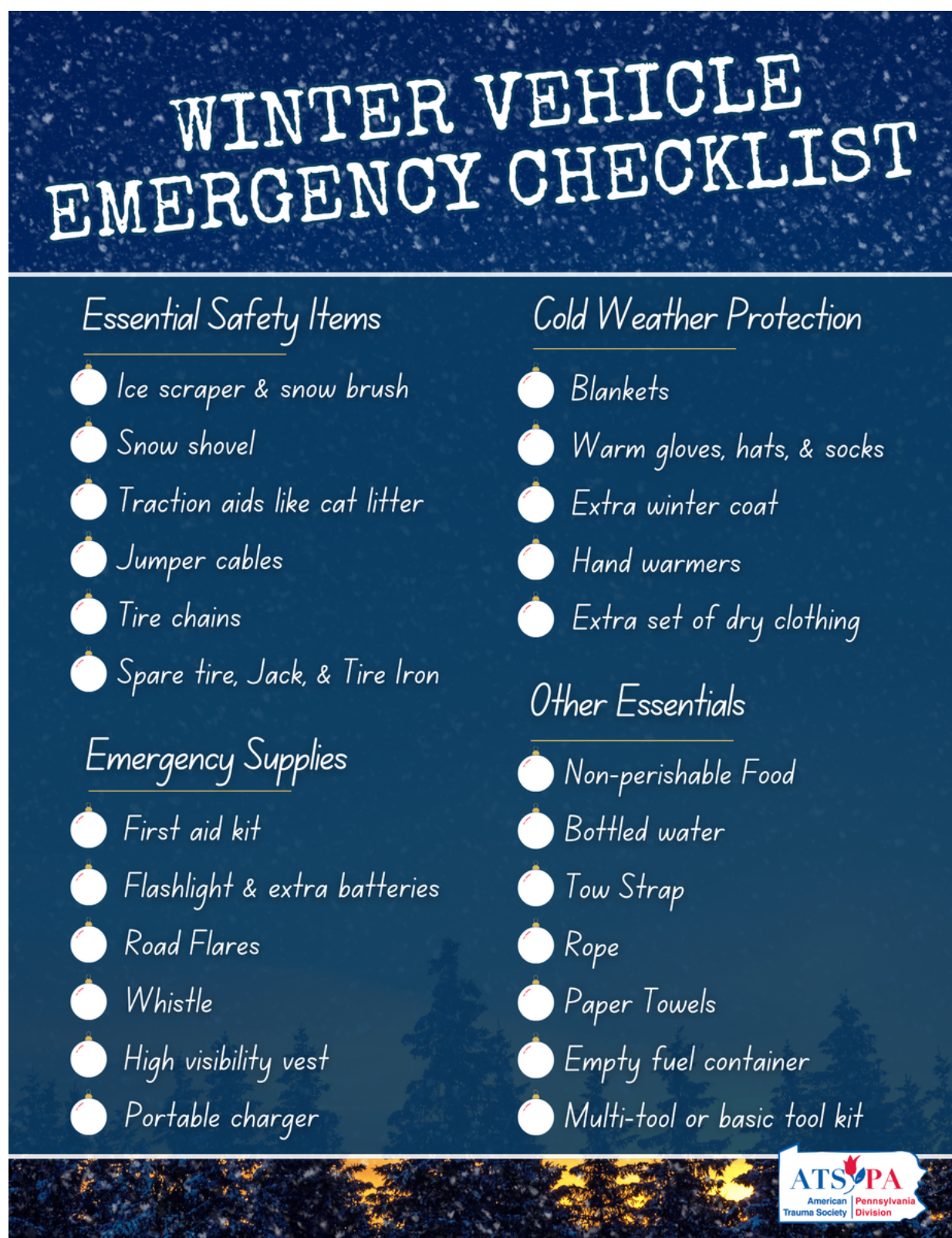
SFX: Snow plow, windshield scraping, then soft driving ambiance

Narrator: Winter weather brings hazards like black ice, low visibility, and snow-covered roads. Protect yourself and others by slowing down, increasing following distance, and never driving on autopilot. Clear all snow from your vehicle and check your tires, wipers, and fluids before heading out. And when storms hit, avoid unnecessary travel.

Tag: This winter, make safety your destination. A message from the American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division.

Outreach Tools

The ATSPA offers printable handouts to the public for free on our website.



Outreach Tools

Social Media Toolkit

• Sample posts for Facebook

Post 1: Winter Hazards

❄️ Winter roads can be dangerous.

Black ice, low visibility, and snowy pavement increase your risk for crashes.

This season, slow down, increase your following distance, and keep your windshield and headlights clean. Let's keep Pennsylvania's roads safe—together.

Post 2: Vehicle Prep

Before you drive this winter, take 2 minutes to prepare your vehicle:

- ✓ Clear all snow and ice
- ✓ Check tire tread and air pressure
- ✓ Refill washer fluid
- ✓ Replace worn wipers

A little preparation helps prevent big problems. Stay safe out there! ❄️🚗

Post 3: Black Ice Awareness

Black ice is invisible—and extremely dangerous.

Look out for icy patches on bridges, overpasses, and shaded roads. If you skid, ease off the gas and steer gently—don't slam the brakes.

Drive smart and stay alert this winter. ❄️

• Sample posts for X

Post 1

📌 1 in 4 adults 65+ falls each year. Falls are NOT a normal part of aging—prevention is possible! Learn more: [Insert Link] #FallPrevention #HealthyAging

Post 2

💡 Preventing falls starts at home:

- ✓ Remove clutter
- ✓ Add grab bars
- ✓ Good lighting
- ✓ Stay active

More tips: [Insert Link] #FallsFree #InjuryPrevention

Post 3

Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults. But with awareness + action, we can keep our communities safe. ❤️ #FallPrevention #ATSPA



Outreach Tools

 Press & Promotion Materials - Sample press release for local media

Local Healthcare Leaders Urge Winter Driving Safety as Temperatures Drop

[City, PA] — As winter weather arrives in Pennsylvania, [Organization Name] is reminding drivers to take precautions to stay safe on the road. Snow, ice, and reduced visibility contribute to thousands of crashes every year, many of which are preventable with simple safety steps.

“Winter driving hazards like black ice, snowy roads, and low visibility make preparation critical,” said [Spokesperson Name, Title]. “A few minutes of planning can prevent serious injuries.”

Healthcare and injury prevention leaders emphasize five of the most common winter driving hazards:

1. **Black Ice** - Black ice is one of the most deceptive winter hazards because it is nearly invisible. It forms when moisture freezes on the roadway, especially early in the morning or overnight. Drivers often don't realize the road is slick until they lose traction. Black ice is most common on bridges, overpasses, shaded roadways, and untreated surfaces. Staying alert, slowing down, and avoiding sudden braking or sharp turns can reduce the risk of losing control.
2. **Reduced Visibility** - Snowfall, blowing snow, fog, and early nightfall can significantly limit a driver's ability to see hazards ahead. Dirty or snow-covered headlights, windshields, and mirrors can make the problem even worse. Reduced visibility contributes to rear-end crashes, lane departures, and collisions with pedestrians. Drivers are urged to use headlights during all winter weather events, keep windows and mirrors clear, and increase following distance.
3. **Snow and Ice-Covered Roads** - Snow accumulation and packed ice create slippery conditions that impact stopping distance and steering control. Even a thin layer of snow can cause tires to lose grip, especially at higher speeds. Plow trucks and salt crews work continuously during storms, but roads may remain hazardous for hours. Motorists should reduce speed, avoid sudden maneuvers, and allow extra time to reach their destinations.
4. **Poor Vehicle Maintenance** - Many winter crashes stem from preventable mechanical issues. Worn tires struggle to grip icy roads, failing wipers reduce visibility, and low fluids can lead to breakdowns in extreme cold. Dead batteries are also more common during winter months. Regular maintenance—checking tire tread, testing the battery, topping off washer fluid, and ensuring lights and wipers are operational—helps keep vehicles reliable and safe.
5. **Speeding and Tailgating** - Driving too fast for conditions is one of the leading causes of winter collisions. Even if the speed limit is posted at 55 mph, winter weather often requires drivers to travel significantly slower. Tailgating further increases the risk, as stopping distances more than double on snow and ice. Maintaining a safe following distance and reducing speed gives drivers more time to react to sudden stops, skidding vehicles, or obstacles hidden beneath snow.

[Organization Name] encourages drivers to:

- Slow down and increase following distance.
- Clear all snow and ice before driving.
- Check tires, wipers, and fluids.
- Watch for black ice, especially on bridges and shaded areas.
- Avoid unnecessary travel during severe weather.

For more information about winter driving safety and injury prevention, visit [Website or ATSPA.org].

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About [Organization Name]

[Insert a brief 2–3 sentence description of your organization and mission.]