



Preparation & patience needed for safe winter driving

With the winter months upon us, it is a fact that snow and ice will be around for a while. Since Southern Valley isn't located in a town, it is also a fact that everyone has to drive to school. With bad roads and teen drivers, there are some tips that everyone should remember to make sure the trip to and from school is safe.

The first topic when talking about winter driving is awareness. Pay attention to the weather so you aren't caught off guard. There are many weather apps available to see what is in the forecast. Find one, download it, and check it every couple of days.

Before getting behind the wheel, there are some things you should do starting with packing necessities. In the winter you should keep some bottled water, a blanket, a cell phone charger, hats, gloves, and some emergency food just in case. Also keep in mind that an almost full tank of gas is a good idea in case you get stuck and are stranded for a while. Always make sure your windshields are clear so you can see out of them.

The next important topic when discussing winter driving is time. Leave home early so you aren't late for school. Often in the winter, students need to drive more slowly because there can be ice or snow on the road. Keep in mind that with the wind blowing, there can be spots on the road that are dangerous even if the entire road isn't covered. In the end, remember it's better to be a little late than to slide around or even go into the ditch.

The roads out to the school shouldn't be like a race track. While behind the wheel, be more observant of other cars. Drivers need to keep a safe distance between them and other cars. Students also need to pass with care, or better yet just slow down and take a few extra minutes to get where you are going, especially if there is fog or if it is at night.

Think an accident won't happen to you? According to <https://dot.nebraska.gov/safety/driving/teen/>, in 2020 Nebraska teen drivers ages 19 & younger were involved in 19% of all crashes due to poor road conditions. Teens were also involved in 28% of all single-vehicle rollover crashes and 25% of crashes between 9 p.m. and midnight.

Snow days are fun, but when there are flakes flying and we still have school, be careful while on the road. Winter driving can be tricky, but with some preparation and patience you can get to and from school in a safe manner.

