



Winter Driving Tips – the Schmid Skid Index

We all know what driving in a Syracuse winter is like, but here are a few safety hints from Rudy Schmid Body & Frame Shop to help you avoid a dangerous skid or to keep your car in tune for the season.

- Clear snow and ice from ALL your windows, side mirrors, headlights and taillights. Letting your car become a "snow bank on four wheels" can cause cars around you to experience whiteouts.
- At zero degrees, your car battery only works at 40 percent of its strength. Keep your battery terminals clean, and have a qualified auto technician make sure your battery is in tip-top winter shape!
- Your cold car warms up better when it's being driven rather than sitting idling. Warm the car up for two minutes or less and drive slowly until the heat comes on inside the car – that's all you need and it doesn't waste fuel or your time!
- Dip your car key into rubbing alcohol and insert it into a frozen lock rather than pouring hot water on the lock, if you can't get into a locked vehicle.
- Be sure to dilute your antifreeze per the manufacturer's recommendations before pouring it into a cool radiator – it helps avoid a burst radiator! Antifreeze needs to be changed every other year.
- If your car's undercarriage is covered with salt and ice, parking it in the garage could increase the chance for rust. Most garages nowadays are warm, relatively speaking, and having the salty-ice mix melt speeds the rusting process. By keeping the car outdoors, you slow down the rusting process until the temperature warms enough to get the salt washed from the car!
- SUV drivers need to take extra caution in winter weather. SUVs have a higher center of gravity and are prone to rolling during sharp turns! Sure, you SUV drivers can plow through snow BUT you also take much longer to stop! If your vehicle is equipped with an ABS system, remember that ABS means "Anti-lock Braking System", not "Automatic Brakes"! Maintain extra distance between you and the car ahead of you, no matter what model car.
- Be prepared! During the winter, it's wise to be equipped with a snow brush, ice scraper, flashlight, jumper cables, a small shovel, a blanket, and sand or non-clumping cat litter!
- Have steering, suspension and brakes checked! If parts are worn or if the vehicle is out of alignment, the vehicle's poor handling just MIGHT NOT have to do with sloppy road conditions!
- How are your battery and tires? Might be a good time to replace. And don't forget the wiper blades – they should be changed every six months!
- Don't forget to keep your gas tank at least half-full, and try to get in a little winter-driving practice when the weather changes!