

## **DID YOU KNOW???**

### **WINTER DRIVING HAS SLOW START BUT WILL COME AGAIN**

With a warm late fall and early winter (meteorologically winter starts December 1st), slippery driving has been substantially delayed, but don't expect the warm weather to continue – we will have winter-type driving difficulties, and you need to be ready.

Major Charles E. Guess, Commander of Troop "B", reminds us all that winter hazards can be the most dangerous of all driving situations we face. More people are involved in crashes during the winter months than any other time of the year. Perhaps the most important thing in winter driving is to slow down! You should adjust your speed to the existing conditions. Speed is almost always a contributing factor in winter crashes. During winter driving, you should be extra vigilant of other drivers, advises Major Guess.

The safety tips normally given at this time are the ones we have heard hundreds of times, including drive more slowly, clean off your windshield, rear window, lights, mirrors, don't follow as closely as usual, use your lights so you can be seen better, etc. The problem is, we all know what we SHOULD do, but we don't do these things for any number of reasons. And, since we already KNOW what we should do, we won't arbitrarily decide to do it just because we read that we should in the paper.

But, each year there is always hope, and here's hoping that the following winter driving tips, which aren't the usual ones you always hear about, are helpful.

1) The immediate areas where vehicles stop and start, such as just before a stop sign or a traffic signal, are usually more slippery than the rest of the road because of the action of vehicles stopping or starting. When tires skid when stopping or spin when starting up again, ice often forms, so expect these areas to be more slippery.

2) In some cases, consider shifting into neutral. Case in point! On Franklin St. in Malone, just before the traffic signal at Finney Blvd., there is a hill. When this section is slippery, it can be advisable to shift your vehicle into neutral. With the vehicle in drive, even with your foot on the brake, the vehicle is still trying to push you ahead, especially with all-wheel or rear wheel drive. By shifting into neutral, your vehicle is no longer being propelled forward by the engine, just the force of gravity and your momentum.

3) On slippery roads, NEVER use your cruise control. Cruise is trying to keep your speed at the pre-set value. With cruise engaged on slippery roads, it will make it more difficult to keep your vehicle under control.

4) Action of tires on snowy roads often causes the tire tracks to become more slippery than other parts of the road. Often the immediate shoulder and the middle of the driving lane will have more traction than the part of the road where most drivers drive. Consider driving slightly to the right of the center of the driving lane for better traction.

5) Lastly, winter driving requires drivers to pay more attention to their driving than usual. Entering a curve too fast can be fatal. As you approach a curve, you had better know how sharp it really is, and thus how slow you must proceed to safely negotiate it. Slippery conditions make it much more important to observe the warning sign (black lettering on a yellow background) which normally has a suggested speed limit under DRY conditions, meaning your vehicle should be well below this speed.

Just remember winter driving requires an increased awareness of driving conditions and the necessity to adjust accordingly. Drive safely – winter or anytime.