



North Carolina encounters unpredictable weather during the winter months. In early 2015 winter storms struck within weeks of each other and dumped inches of snow, sleet, freezing rain or ice, causing an unprecedented number of accidents and school cancellations. Single digit temperatures were recorded in many areas of the state. North Carolina experiences a variety of winter weather patterns that provide a mixed bag of precipitation because of its proximity to weather influences of the Appalachian Mountains, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf Stream and Gulf of Mexico. Please keep in mind the following tips when driving during this season.

### Drive Safely, Use Caution

Snow and ice can cause hazardous driving conditions, which lead to massive traffic delays. Keep in mind that road conditions can quickly change. When driving in winter weather, remember to:

- Reduce your speed.
- Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles.
- Approach bridges and overpasses with caution since they often become icy prior to roadways. . Do not push your brakes while on a bridge.
- If you begin to slide, take your foot off the gas and turn the steering wheel in the direction of the slide. Do not apply the brakes.
- If you need to pull off the highway, set your emergency flashers.
- Do not set out on foot unless you see a building nearby where you can take shelter.
- If running the engine to keep warm, crack a window open to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never let everyone in the car sleep at once. One person should stay awake to watch for rescue crews. Tie a colored cloth to the antenna or door to make you visible.

## Food Safety

The following is a list of tips you'll want to follow in order to better avoid a leading source of holiday illness – food poisoning:

- Keep food, utensils, preparation surfaces and hands clean
- Keep hot foods hot (165 degrees), and cold foods cold (41 degrees)
- Keep cold foods on a bed of ice while serving
- After a meal, refrigerate left over food as soon as possible

### Tips for preparing a holiday turkey:

- Defrost your turkey in the refrigerator (24 hours for every 5 pounds), never at room temperature. You can speed up defrosting by soaking the bird in cold water (30 minutes per pound)
- Stuff your turkey just before cooking. Your stuffing could spoil if you stuff the turkey the night before)
- Use a thermometer when cooking meat, and don't allow the turkey to sit out for more than 2 hours after serving

## Holiday Safety Tips

- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.
- Avoid smoking near flammable decorations.
- Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out anywhere in the home. See that each family member knows what to do and then practice.

### PRACTICE THE PLAN!

- Avoid wearing loose flowing clothes—particularly long, open sleeves—near open flames - such as those of a fireplace, stove, or candlelit table.
- Never burn candles near evergreens.
- Burning evergreens in the fireplace can also be hazardous. When dry, greens burn like tinder. Flames can flare out of control, and send sparks flying into a room, or up the chimney to ignite creosote deposits.
- Plan for safety. Remember, there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and/or electrical connections.