CAP heath & wellness briefing: Winter Driving Safety

Winter weather affects large portions of the country and simple preparation can reduce the risk to drivers in all areas.

1. "Three P's" we are discussing include:
* Prepare your car
* Protect yourself
* Prevent an accident
1. Prepare your car before a winter storm arrives
* Check your battery to ensure starting ability
* Fill windshield washer
* Check windshield wipers
* Check the tires on the car
	+ Ensure adequate tread
	+ Drivers in areas with frequent winter snow should consider specific winter tires
		- May be studded
		- Rubber composition is stickier for improved traction
		- More aggressive tread pattern
		- Wear faster than other tires
		- Consider placing winter tires on all four wheels
	+ Drivers where snow is uncommon can use all weather tires
* Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit
1. Emergency Supply Kit
* Flashlight with spare batteries
* Flares
* Kitty litter (for traction if stuck)
* Jumper cables
* Snow brush and ice scraper
* Snow shovel
* Blankets
* Reflective vest
* First aid kit
* Fire extinguisher
1. When the storm hits
* Don't use parking brake
	+ It may not fully release if frozen
* Keep gas tank full
	+ Prevent condensation of moisture in the tank
* Warm up car before driving
* Don't use cruise control
	+ Avoid loss of traction and control on icy patches
* FULLY clear snow and ice from windows
	+ Don't forget the side windows
* Decreased visibility use your headlights
	+ Let other traffic see you
1. Safe driving techniques
* Don't stop on hills if at all possible, may be impossible to start up again.
* Start slowly, don’t spin your tires.
* Allow extra time and distance to stop
* Burn your headlights
* Four-wheel drive helps you start but won't help you stop
* Practice driving your car in snow on an open space if you are inexperienced
* Braking
	+ Antilock brakes -- DON'T pump your brakes
	+ "old fashioned" brakes -- Pump your brakes to avoid locking
* If you skid, steer into the skid to regain control
1. If you are stuck or stalled
* Stay in your car if possible
* Turn on interior light at night
* Place a bright marker on your car
* Use flares to warn oncoming traffic
* Clear the exhaust pipe if you run your car while stopped to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

7. Prepared for a possible emergency:

* Let someone know where you are going and your planned route
* Dress for the possibility that you might have to get out of your car into the weather
	+ Boots
	+ Winter Jacket
	+ Hat and gloves

8. Drive defensively:

* Slow down if conditions indicate
* Increase the spacing between the car in front of you
* Four wheel drive will help you go but not help you stop
* Watch for pedestrians
* Avoid distractions while driving
* Avoid fatigue
* Wear sunglasses if the sun is bright