

Winter Driving

Chapter 10

Wintry road surface conditions create stopping and handling problems. Following too close and traveling too fast for road conditions are the major crash causation factors. Storm conditions affect the condition of roadways, not only on the day of the storm, but possibly for days after a storm when thaw-freeze cycles may occur. Black ice is another condition that presents a danger to motorists.



Winter crashes account for a surprisingly high number of crashes each year – over 7,000 – nearly 20% of Maine’s annual crash total. December wintry road surface-related crash activity appears highest of any month, although December is probably not the month having the most frequent and severe storms. December’s high wintry crash frequency seems to indicate that it takes drivers time to adjust to the new season of ice, snow and slush conditions. Run Off Road and Head On collisions double in proportion to that on dry roads indicating the degree of vehicle control issues that exist. Not surprisingly, police crash reports cite driver unsafe speed three times as often when wintry road conditions exist.

