

News Column

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Preparing for Winter Travels

“Oh, the weather outside is frightful...”. Isn’t that the truth! If you are anything like me, you probably did not enjoy last week’s brutal cold temperatures.

Many Kansans will travel throughout the next week to spend time with loved ones for Christmas and New Year's. Although this week’s forecast is looking better than last, planning now for safe travels throughout the remainder of the winter season is a great idea.

Based on recent conditions and predictions for the upcoming winter season, we are likely to see colder temperatures and greater amounts of precipitation in comparison to recent years. Bitter cold temperatures made worse with wind chills, sleet, and snow are all conditions that can make travel challenging. Preparing for worst-case scenarios like blowing a tire, getting stuck in a snowstorm, or having a fuel line freeze up can help you and your family stay safe during the winter months. Consider the following tips to plan for the remainder of this season.

Keep your gas tank topped off. Icy roads can prolong drive times, which will also increase the amount of fuel needed to make it to your destination. Keeping a full tank can also make a world of difference if you get stuck or stranded on the side of the road. You will be able to keep the vehicle running while you wait for help to arrive. Kitty litter and sand are good options to have on hand as they can increase tire traction in snow.

Pack layers. If you find yourself in a pinch, having a heavy coat, gloves, hat, and waterproof boots can make a big difference. Consider keeping a duffle bag with all these items in your trunk all season long. Include blankets for extra layers and sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's reflection on the snow.

Items like ice scrapers, snow brushes, jumper cables, flashlights, phone chargers, and extra windshield wiper fluid are great additions to an emergency travel kit. A first aid kit with adhesive tape, antiseptic wipes, gauze pads, and medical wrap could take your preparedness to the next level. Include bottled water and non-perishable food items such as granola bars, nuts or trail mix, and other kid-friendly snacks.

Following these simple tips and preparing now can help you and your family stay safe while on the road this winter.

For more information about Family and Community Wellness, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension, contact the office at 620-583-7455, email me at celutz@ksu.edu or stop by the office. Visit the K-State Research and Extension - Greenwood County Facebook page and www.greenwood.k-state.edu for more up-to-date information on programming.