



Spokane County  
— Sheriff —  
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News Release

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### Slow Going Beats No Showing

For many Spokane-area commuters Monday, the first taste of winter driving conditions was a bitter one.

By noon, area law enforcement agencies had recorded nearly 30 crashes and slide-offs, many caused by motorists failing to recognize that roadways had been slickened by rain and fog that froze to roadway surfaces overnight.

For the unwary or reckless, black ice was a one-way ticket to the ditch. Many of the slide-offs resulted in roll-overs because the ground is not yet frozen and vehicles flipped as tires dug into the mire.

As area forecasts continue to call for precipitation coupled with below-freezing temperatures, this would be an excellent time to check your vehicle for winter readiness and check your summer driving habits at the (garage) door.

Winter driving poses visibility risks that far outweigh those in warmer months. Make sure that your windshield wipers are intact and functional, and top off your windshield fluid reservoir so you can effectively wash away road spray and grime tossed up by other vehicles.

Lighting is important. Make sure your head, brake and taillights are all operational, and then use them. Three p.m. on a rainy December day is not too early to use your headlights to see and be seen.

Check out your tires and replace them if they are worn or damaged. Good traction can help you drive out of a bad situation as much as brakes can slow you before you enter one.

Then perform a head check -- in other words, is your thinking and attitude where it needs to be to safely navigate winter roads.

Remember that speed limits are determined for best-possible road conditions. In winter driving conditions, you must reduce your speed and increase your following distances.

Be a courteous driver – what goes around, comes around.

And last but not least, use your seat and shoulder belts religiously. They make the difference between one-car, roll-over, non-injury collision and one that is a fatality.

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