

**Southern Pines Police Department**  
**Safety Tips**  
*Winter Safety*

During winter weather, make sure you clear snow from all your vehicle windows AND your headlights, tail lights and brake lights. The driver's vision must be unobstructed and your lights must be visible. If you need your windshield wipers due to inclement weather, North Carolina General Statutes require your headlights to be on.

During cold weather, are you prepared to be stranded? What will you do if your car becomes disabled, won't start or you slide off the road? Our experience shows that, due to a high volume of calls during bad weather, you may have to wait several hours for a tow truck or auto assistance company to respond to your location. What can you do to prepare? Here are a few simple steps to make the situation a little safer. First, if you are on or near a highway, move off the road as far as possible. If you have a cell phone, call 911 to have a police officer check on you and assist. If you are a passing motorist and see a situation where a car is disabled and on or near the highway or occupied, call 911 on their behalf, but NEVER get out of the car on the highway. Many local police agencies use an orange tag to affix to the door handle or antenna of a car that has already been checked, people are safe and arrangements have been made to have it removed. Look for this tag as you pass and let the 911 operator know if you saw one. Turn on your four-way flashers and, if you have reflective markers, set them up behind your car. Be careful of road flares as they burn at extremely high temperatures and can be dangerous. However, take great care if you exit your vehicle. Never exit on the side closest to the road; use the passenger side to exit on the shoulder. Only place these items on the shoulder and only if you can do so safely. Make a decision about staying in your car. If it is extremely cold out and you are far enough off the road, you may want to stay in the car to keep out of the wind. If you do and your engine runs, you may want to run it occasionally to keep warm, but be careful not to idle the engine too long. Make sure the tailpipe is not blocked by snow or other debris so that dangerous fumes won't back up into the car. Run it only for a few minutes, then shut it off. A better solution is to pack some basic items in your car that would help. Keep a warm blanket or two handy as well as extra hats and gloves. You may also want to keep a small box of protein or granola-type bars and something to drink in a sealed container that will not spoil over the winter. Keep your seatbelt on so it can provide some protection if your car gets hit. If you are not comfortable remaining in the car and it is safe to get out, be aware of any other traffic in the area and move far enough away from the vehicle. Being stranded can be a frustrating experience. Keep it from becoming worse by taking these simple steps to protect yourself from the elements and other traffic.

Whether you shovel, use a snow blower or have your driveway plowed by a private contractor, it's important to remember that snow banks should never be so high as to limit your view, or that of an oncoming motorist, as you pull out of a driveway. Also, vehicle operators should come to a complete stop when emerging from a driveway, private road or building. So, be certain that your windshield is clear, that you can see properly over snow embankments, and take the time to check for oncoming vehicles, animals and pedestrians. Drivers should always watch carefully for children playing on or in snow banks. It only takes an instant for a child to slide, sled, or jump into the path of a vehicle with tragic consequences.

**For more information or a presentation on this topic, contact the Community Services Coordinator at (910) 692-2732.**