

Winterizing Your "To Go" Kit

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Introduction

As the heat and humidity of summer leave and autumn temperatures drop it's a good time to consider some seasonal changes in your "To Go" kit. Your radio equipment may stay essentially the same all year but seasonal changes to your personal gear are essential to your safety in the field.

Here in the Midwest winter weather can and does change quickly. What starts as a sunny winter day on your way to work can be a blizzard by the time you head for home in the evening. Do you carry suitable clothing and supplies to survive an unexpected winter storm?

Vehicles

Fall is a good time of year to check your vehicle over. Your owner's manual will have suggestions specific to your car or truck but in general check the following items:

- Tires with serviceable tread, properly inflated. Don't forget to check your spare tire as well.
- Jumper cables.
- Engine coolant checked and tested to the proper temperature range.
- Battery with cleaned terminals, filled with water if applicable and in good condition.
- Engine tuned up and running properly?

- Exhaust system inspected - if you've slid off the road and are running the engine while help arrives you don't want to be breathing exhaust fumes.

Emergency Clothing and Supplies

Whether you're called out for a communications emergency or just traveling with your family be prepared to safely survive a breakdown or getting stuck in the ice and snow.

Things you should have on hand:

- Take inventory of your First Aid kit. Does anything need replacing?
- Pencil and paper for notes in case of an accident
- Heavy coat, hat, gloves, heavy socks and boots to keep you warm if you get stuck or have to go for help.
- Flashlight with fresh batteries.
- Emergency food such as granola bars, etc.
- Emergency candles and a holder like an empty, cleaned tuna tin, etc. (These will generate a small amount of heat and provide light so you don't use up your flashlight batteries.
- Small shovel.