Mountain and Winter Driving

Tips and Tricks
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Get ready for some twists and turns!
Today’s Talking Points

• Know Before You Go
• Type of Vehicle
• Driving Conditions & Hazards
• Driving Rules
• Survival Gear
• Tips
• Lessons Learned
• Takeaways
Know Before You Go…
But Expect the Unexpected

- Check Weather and Road Conditions prior to leaving
- Mountain Weather Forecast
  - https://www.mountain-forecast.com/
- Mount Graham Columbine Weather Station
  - https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lat=32.690243035492266&lon=-109.87358093261719&site=twc&unit=0&lg=en&FcntType=text#.YypZhHbMKUd
- ADOT
  - https://az511.gov/
What kind of vehicle should I drive up the mountain in the winter?

- **Four-wheel drive**
  - Make sure it is equipped with snow chains and survival gear
  - Be familiar with your vehicle and how it operates. Do you know how to shift into 4WD? What are the limits of the vehicle?
- High clearance
- Rental vehicles: the operator is responsible to make sure it is equipped with all of the winter survival gear that is required
How About Summer?

• Four-Wheel Drive/AWD
• High Clearance
• Equipped with Survival Gear

My GPS says there’s a campground around here, somewhere...
Driving Hazards

Snow/Blizzard Conditions
Ice/Black Ice
Fog
Rain
Washouts
Rock and Mudslides
Wildlife
Navigating the Conditions

- Washboards
  - Slow down especially when approaching a curve to maintain control
  - Faster is not better
- Limited visibility caused by dust, fog, blizzard and rainy conditions
  - Slow down and give yourself more distance if you are following another vehicle
  - It may be necessary to pull over and wait it out
    - Get as far off road as possible
    - Turn off lights
- Obstacles in road such as traffic, potholes, rocks, branches and downed trees
  - Look ahead
- Narrow road not wide enough for 2 vehicles, ie Mount Graham access road
  - Stop
  - The vehicle going uphill needs to back down to a spot wide enough for the other vehicle to pass
Navigating Curves

- Slow down and brake before entering curves and traveling downhill
  - Braking while in them reduces the ability to maintain vehicle control
- Don’t drive downhill any faster than you would drive uphill
- Select lower gear while going downhill
- Watch for wildlife, other vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians
- Be aware of soft shoulders; they can pull a vehicle into the ditch or worse, cause a rollover
Rules For Driving In The Snow

• Chain up properly.
• A plowed road may look wider than normal, but beware: the shoulders will be soft snow that will not support the weight of the vehicle
• Traveling after dark is highly discouraged. If it is necessary, please use the buddy system
• Make sure your two-way radios are working and stay in contact with someone
• Take your survival gear
• Slow down!
What Should Each Vehicle Carry?

• List of all emergency telephone and radio contact numbers
• Fire extinguisher
• Pocket lighter or butane mini-torch
• Small shovel
• First Aid Kit
• Emergency Blanket per passenger
• Snow Chains
• Ice Scraper
• Bag of sand
• Tool kit: pliers, duct and electrical tape, screwdrivers, plastic warning sign, jumper cables, 20ft tow strap
What Should I Bring?

• **Personal items to have with you:**
  • Winter gloves (handy for putting on snow chains too)
  • Heavy coat
  • Hat
  • Boots
  • Extra supply of water and food
  • NO flops, shorts or sleeveless shirts!
Safe Mountain Driving
Vehicle Tips

• Slow down. Speed will get you in trouble
• Make sure your fuel tank is full
• Tires are properly inflated
• Windshield wipers are in good condition and check wiper fluid
Why Is This Important?

- So, we can learn from past incidents and prevent new ones
- Bumblebee encounter on Mount Graham
- Rollover on Mount Lemmon
- General public vehicle sideswiping a U of A vehicle
What Should I Do If I Am In An Accident?

- If there are injuries, call 911
- Risk Management and Safety, Fleet Safety Policy, Number RM-002, sec 3.5 states: All accidents involving a university vehicle or associated with a university activity (regardless of vehicle ownership) must be reported to RM&S and to the driver's supervisor or university management official.
- Remember: the driver has obligations to stop, render aid when it’s necessary, make notifications, exchange info or leave info. Leaving the scene could be a criminal offense.
Take aways

• Slow Down
• Look Ahead
• Be Prepared for Changing Conditions

You Never Know What Might Be Lurking Around the Next Bend
Questions????