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Stay safe this winter with these preparedness tips

The Sioux County Sheriff's Office wants everyone to be safe this winter. Anytime between now and spring, weather can change rapidly, creating very dangerous conditions for everyone. Please take time now to read our safety tips, share with your loved ones, friends and get into the mindset now to prepare for the dangers that winter can bring.

Winter Safety Preparedness:

- Prepare your vehicles now; if you aren't able to do this yourself, bring them to a trusted mechanic to make sure they are ready for winter, especially checking the vehicle battery condition and antifreeze.
- Make sure your cell phone is charged up before you take winter trips and pack a phone charger, flashlight, hat, gloves, blankets, shovel and non-perishable food snacks in your vehicle in case you become stranded.
- Become accustomed now checking weather reports for where you plan on driving before leaving for the trip.

Driving in the Snow:

- Avoid fatigue; get rest before taking on winter tasks and driving.
- Never warm up your vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly to maintain traction; anticipate your need to stop, especially on ice and snow-covered roads.
- Reduce your speed and remember that everything takes longer on snow and ice covered roads-give yourself time to maneuver.
- Avoid stopping while going up snow or ice covered hills and as you crest the hill, reduce speed and proceed down hills with caution.
- Make sure your tires are properly inflated; cold air reduces the tire pressure.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full and use fuel line antifreeze.
- Most importantly, stay home when weather is dangerous. Use good judgment-if you don't have to go out, don't. Even if you believe you can drive well under bad weather conditions, not everyone else can.
- If you become stranded, stay inside you vehicle. It becomes a temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to find you. Don't try to walk in a severe winter storm. It's easy to lose sight of your vehicle and become disoriented and lost.