

Winter driving tips

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Winter driving can be hazardous and scary, especially in Oregon regions that get a lot of snow and ice. Additional preparations can help make a trip safer or help motorists deal with an emergency.

The following safety tips can help prevent motor vehicle injuries due to winter storms.

Prepare

- Maintain your car: Check battery, tire tread, and windshield wipers;

keep your windows clear; put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir; and check your antifreeze.

- Have On Hand: Flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter, even floor mats), shovel, snow brush and ice scraper, warning devices (like flares) and blankets. For long trips, add food and water, medication and cell phone.
- Stopped or stalled? Stay in your car; don't overexert; put bright markers on antenna or windows, shine dome light; and if you run the car, clear exhaust pipe and run it just enough to stay warm.

- Plan your route: Allow plenty of time (check the weather and leave early if necessary), be familiar with the maps/directions and let others know your route and arrival time.

Practice cold weather driving

- During daylight, rehearse maneuvers slowly on ice or snow in an empty lot.
- Steer into a skid.
- Know what your brakes will do – stomp on antilock brakes, pump on non-antilock brakes.
- Stopping distances are longer on water-covered ice and ice.

- Don't idle for a long time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.

Snow zones ahead

Are you prepared for inclement weather? Check your vehicle's condition before you go and pack emergency supplies in case you get stuck.

Make sure you have appropriate chains or traction tires; slow down and drive according to conditions of the road.

Check out road conditions, travel information and road cameras by visiting TripCheck.com or call 511.

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This history isn't taught in most schools. But it should be. Because the relationship with Tribal governments was central to the early growth of the United States.

Back then, Tribal nations had a valuable resource – land. The United States declared itself to have territorial authority over our lands and through hundreds of treaties and other agreements, Tribal lands were placed in TRUST by the United States government. That is how the United States became our trustee.

It promised to protect and uphold our right to govern ourselves, to support the right and ability of Tribal governments to care for their own people and to help us manage our remaining lands and resources in our best interests. These are not mere agreements. These promises are treaties between nations. Under the Constitution, they are the supreme law of the land – and always will be.

That was the beginning of our relationship. It was based on respect and full of promise – just as it is today. But our relationship hasn't always been so promising.

“The Progress of Civilization”

We have inherited an anguished history that should not be ignored, but understood so it will never be repeated. Our history produced generations of trauma, poverty and abuse that we are still fighting to undo. Tribes removed from their homelands. Families forced across the country. Lands and resources stolen – despite the guarantees of treaties, laws, executive orders and judicial decisions.

Our rights, our needs and our hopes for the future were denied or ignored. Many thought Tribes would disappear. They thought our cultures would vanish. They believed our people would assimilate.

That way of thinking is carved deeply into the dominant American psyche. It's carved into old, outdated federal policies. It's even carved into stone. Over the Senate entrance of the United States Capitol, there is a marble frieze. A massive sculpture called “The Progress of Civilization.”

It begins with Indians beside a grave. In the middle is a pioneer, lady liberty and a soldier. It ends with waves of grain representing fertility and an anchor representing hope. Here is how the architect of the Capitol's official website describes it: “Indian chief, Indian mother and child and Indian grave represent the early days of America.”

That sculptor thought a grave represented the fate of Tribal nations. It just goes to show – he knew nothing of the resilience of Native people!

We have not disappeared and we are not victims. We have persevered. We are survivors and we are growing stronger every day. We are thriving 21st century governments built on self-determination. Yes, our ancestors were central to America's early days. But we are also central to America's present – and vital to its future.

Progress is not built on the graves of our people. It is built with our people and by our people.

Progress made through self-determination

I would like to take a moment to recognize those leaders of the past – Ernie Stevens Sr., Wilma Mankiller, Wendell Chino, Joe DeLaCruz and so many others. They were relentless in promoting the simple fact that progress in Indian Country was built with our people and by our people. Through their efforts, Tribal self-determination returned to the forefront of federal policy.

In 1970, President Nixon addressed a joint session of Congress and said, “On virtually every scale of measurement – employment, income, education, health – the condition of the Indian people ranks at the bottom. The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions.”

Nixon urged Congress to empower Tribal governments to do what is best for Tribal citizens. And 46 years later, we have proven the wisdom of his conviction.

The Pueblo of Isleta now runs its local elementary school – for the first time in over a century – taking it over from the federal government. In those hallways and classrooms, Isleta students are now immersed in their language, their values and their traditions.

Likewise, the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla have reshaped their child welfare system to strengthen families. Now, 70 percent more Umatilla children are thriving with their families in their homes and communities.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes developed new skills training, job placement and professional mentoring programs. The impact? They cut their

unemployment rate in half. As one case-worker put it, “When adults are productive in a family, it makes for happy children.”

And the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa have an assisted living residence, where an Elder can lead an independent life in the comfort of her or his own community and culture. This is what we see after 46 years of progress under Tribal self-determination. Slowly but surely, America is re-learning who we are and what we are capable of.

Outside of government, a tide of respect is building. Leading companies are engaging with us, partnering with us and standing with us.

Adidas recently announced it would offer funding and design talent to help schools choose new, more respectful mascots for their athletic teams. Already, nearly 100 schools have reached out to Adidas.

Meanwhile, the state of California banned the R-word – the name of the Washington football team – in public schools. The Seattle Times did the same in its newspaper. I urge other states and companies to join them as they see us for who we are.

Today, we are growing our economies, preparing students to succeed, delivering high-quality health care and solving the unique challenges facing Tribal communities. Today, we are proving that our governments are far more effective than other governments in meeting the needs of our people.

That was the promise our Elders dreamed of and the vision that President Nixon saw back in 1970.

But if we want to make Tribal self-determination the prevailing federal policy in this century, we have much more work to do.

Progress made through partnership

We need to modernize the trust relationship. We need to replace antiquated laws and regulations with policies that trust and empower Tribes to govern. We need a relationship based not on paternalism and control, but on deference and support, a partnership where Tribes continue to meet their own challenges and chart their own path forward.

It's not enough to have a seat at the table. It's not enough to be involved in decisions. We need policies and processes that recognize Tribes as true partners in

governing. Because Indian Country is the source of solutions that work for Indian Country.

During this administration, we have worked on a bipartisan basis to fix what was broken, build on what works and create what is needed. There are countless examples.

We fought for governmental parity by passing the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act unanimously so that when we receive a basic Tribal governmental service, it's not taxed as extra income.

We fought for health security by passing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act so we could strengthen preventative care and modernize Tribal care networks.

We fought to restore our jurisdiction by passing the Tribal Law & Order Act so Tribes can more effectively investigate crimes, prosecute criminals and strengthen public safety.

We fought to protect Native women by strengthening the Violence Against Women Act, empowering Tribes to prosecute any lawbreaker – Native or not – who commits domestic violence on Tribal lands.

We fought to empower Tribal control over Tribal lands by partnering with the Department of Interior to amend leasing and right-of-way regulations.

I could go on and on. While there are many legal and ethical reasons to strengthen Tribal self-determination, there is also a practical reason – it works.

President Obama has certainly embraced this concept as President Nixon did. We expect the next president and the next Congress to work with us to build on this progress.

Progress we can make

In this election year, I invite any candidate of any party: Come to Indian Country. See for yourself: Tribal nations are building brighter futures for their citizens – and all Americans. While Indian Country is still recovering from generations of damaging policies, more than four decades of Tribal self-determination have launched our resurgence. Today, Tribal nations are innovating – and leading the way.

With the 2016 election season well under way, the national dialogue is taking shape. I want to touch on four important areas where Tribes are contributing to that dialogue – community security; economic equality; education, health and wellness; and climate change. These are challenges that affect every American – Native and