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## Driving In Winter Weather: Because Ice Always Thinks It's In Charge

Helpful tips from NCDOT, plus a little common sense

Winter weather in North Carolina has a way of surprising drivers, mostly because it arrives just often enough for everyone to forget how slippery roads can be. While the North Carolina Department of Transportation plans ahead and keeps crews ready to clear roads, rain, ice, and snow can still turn an ordinary commute into an Olympic-level sliding event.

For the latest traffic conditions and updates on roads affected by ice and snow, drivers are encouraged to visit [drivenc.gov](http://drivenc.gov). Checking before you leave can save time, frustration, and an awkward phone call explaining why you're late.

NCDOT notes that while safety guidelines can reduce the risk of a wreck, the only guaranteed way to avoid winter driving trouble is simple: stay off the roads. When that's not an option, preparation is key.

Before heading out, make sure your vehicle is in good working condition and properly equipped. A winter supply kit should include an ice scraper, snow brush, extra windshield washer fluid, antifreeze, and a basic tool kit with jumper cables and flares. Think of it as packing for the possibility that your "quick trip" may become an extended stay.

That supply kit should live in your trunk and include a flashlight, first-aid kit, blanket, shovel, sand for traction, non-perishable snacks, drinking water, and safety flares. Add anything else you might need to remain calm while waiting for help - or while questioning your life choices.

Drivers should also keep at least a half-tank of gas at all times during winter weather. Short commutes have a habit of becoming long ones when traffic slows or roads close, and your fuel gauge does not appreciate surprises.

If you must venture out, slow down and increase your following distance. Excessive speed is the number one cause of winter-weather crashes, and cruise control should be avoided entirely. This is not the time to let your car make decisions for you.

Bridges and overpasses deserve extra caution, as they freeze first. Avoid braking while on a bridge, and approach intersections carefully, especially when traffic lights are out. When that happens, treat the intersection as a four-way stop - yes, even if you're in a hurry.

Clear all snow and ice from your vehicle before driving, including windows, mirrors, roof, hood, lights, and bumpers. Snow flying off your car may look dramatic, but other drivers prefer to keep their windshields unobstructed.

Black ice is particularly dangerous because it often looks like a harmless wet patch. It forms when melting snow or ice refreezes into a thin, nearly invisible layer. Even with treatment, black ice is unpredictable, and drivers usually don't realize it's there until the tires stop cooperating.

To avoid black ice, the safest option is staying home. If driving is unavoidable, go slowly and leave plenty of space between vehicles. Bragging rights are not awarded for discovering black ice first.

If your vehicle begins to slide, don't panic. Avoid braking if possible, and use gentle, steady pressure if you must slow down. Allow the vehicle to regain traction before accelerating. For rear-wheel skids, steer in the direction the rear wheels are moving. For front-wheel skids, shift into neutral and wait for the vehicle to slow before steering where you want to go.

Should you get stuck, resist the urge to spin your wheels. Spinning only digs you deeper. Instead, clear snow from around the tires, spread sand, cat litter, or salt for traction, and gently rock the vehicle back and forth if your owner's manual allows. Patience, not horsepower, usually wins this battle.

Winter driving may not be avoidable, but a little preparation, caution, and humor can go a long way. When in doubt, slow down, stay alert, and remember: ice never plays fair.

## North Carolina Zoo Accepting Applications for Their Summer 2026 Internship Program

The North Carolina Zoo is now accepting applications for its Summer 2026 Internship Program, offering students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain hands-on experience at one of the nation's premier zoological institutions.

The program is designed to provide real-world professional experience, mentorship, and meaningful involvement in the Zoo's mission to protect wildlife and wild places while inspiring conservation of the natural world. Interns work alongside experienced staff and contribute to daily operations that support animal care, education, conservation, and visitor engagement.

Internship opportunities are available across a wide range of interests, including animal care, animal welfare, zoo science, education, horticulture, communications, and operations. Participants gain valuable career skills while exploring potential professional paths in a dynamic, mission-driven environment.

The application window for the Summer 2026 Internship Program runs through March 1, 2026. Applications and additional information are available online at [nczoo.org/internship-opportunities](http://nczoo.org/internship-opportunities).

The Zoo also notes an extended deadline for its Spring Volunteer Services internship, with applications accepted through January 16.

Officials encourage interested students and recent graduates to apply early and take advantage of the opportunity to learn, grow, and make a lasting impact in wildlife conservation.



## Career And College Promise Information Session Jan. 26

Career and College Promise can help students get a jump start on college classes while still in high school. The Career and College Promise (CCP) program at South Piedmont Community College offers eligible North Carolina high school students the opportunity to earn college credit tuition-free before graduation.

The CCP program provides multiple pathways designed to match students' individual goals, whether they plan to continue on to a four-year college or enter the workforce after high school. Depending on the pathway and qualifications, students may earn a certificate, complete their first year of college, or even earn a two-year degree with qualifying unweighted GPAs.

An information session will be held virtually on Monday, January 26, at 6 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. During the session, participants will learn about CCP pathways, eligibility requirements, steps to enrollment, course load expectations, instructional formats, accommodations, technology used at SPCC, and the benefits of the program, along with other helpful details.

The session will also explain the difference between working with a career coach and a high school counselor and how each supports students throughout the process.

Students and families interested in learning more about how Career and College Promise can open doors to college and career opportunities are encouraged to attend the virtual session.

Information and registration are available using the QR Code.



## The Railway Children Movie at the Library

Family-friendly movie morning planned for January 26

The Hampton B. Allen Library will host a free movie showing of *The Railway Children* on Monday, January 26, at 10:00 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room, inviting families and film fans to settle in for a cozy morning at the movies.

Rated PG, the film stars Beau Gadsdon, Eden Hamilton, and Zac Cudby, and offers a heartwarming story suitable for viewers of all ages.

Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy the film, making it an easy way to spend a winter morning with a classic-style adventure and good company at the library.



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