

# THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

## Winter Travel By the National HQ Safety Team

Do you know how to drive in winter conditions? Here is a quick primer to jog your memories (for the experienced road warriors), or to arm you quickly so you can go out and get more information (for the novices among us):

- \* Inspect your vehicle – make sure it is in peak operating condition.

Ensure all fluids are within normal operating levels (cold or hot).

Check condition (tread and sidewalls) and air pressure of your tires (***especially*** remember to check the **SPARE TIRE!**).

Change windshield wiper inserts every six months or sooner if needed (don't forget that rear windshield wiper, if your vehicle has one).

- \* Start your car and let it warm up for a couple minutes before driving off; it might also help to cycle your automatic transmission through the gears to help transmission fluid circulate through the case faster...try to avoid moving a "cold-soaked" car, but do not let it warm up for more than a couple minutes. Many jurisdictions have laws against idling.

- \* Clear snow and ice off the windshield and all windows ***before moving!***

- \* Clear snow off your head and tail lights! Have you ever noticed someone driving down the road during or after a snow and all their lights are covered, but you can see a faint glow behind the white powder? I guess those folks believe that lights can be seen through all that; but they are wrong.

- \* Also clear off your license plate – in many states it is illegal to drive with an obscured license plate.

- \* Brush off all ice and snow from your hood, trunk, and roof...if you cannot reach your roof, buy a smaller car (actually a push broom works

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really well). Do not put others at risk because of selfish habits. Chunks of snow or ice flying off your car onto the highway are very dangerous for the unfortunate drivers behind you.

\* There is no such thing as driving on ice...you slide on ice. You may be lucky enough to slide in the direction you want to go, but it is sliding, nonetheless. If you are on ice and you have ANY control of the vehicle, then there is something else sharing the ice with your tires (like sand, rocks or slush).

\* Do not make any abrupt maneuvers while driving on snow or slippery surfaces – do not brake suddenly, do not accelerate suddenly, and always try to signal intentions further in advance. Nice and gentle corrections to the steering wheel and pressure changes on the pedals will help ensure a mishap-free day.

\* If you encounter an icy spot on the road (especially on a hill or in a turn), do your best to avoid hitting the brake or accelerator; try to keep constant pressure on whatever controls you are currently touching as you enter the hazard until you come out on the other side. This will help prevent loss of control. Of course if holding those controls means you may hit that big tree, then see the guidelines above about smooth and gentle corrections to try and avoid a collision. Just realize that you have diminished control of the vehicle's path.

\* Finally, you must remember to drive at a speed appropriate for conditions even if the posted speed limit is higher than a speed you can safely drive. If you have an accident due to slippery conditions, then (by definition) you were traveling too fast for conditions (which could get you a ticket); even if there was no way you could reasonably know what a safe speed was as you approached that hazard.

This list does not cover all possible scenarios, but it provides a reasonable starting point to learn more about the subject of winter driving. Be safe this winter season and have a wonderful holiday into next year!

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## **Consumer Product Safety Commission Updates** By the National HQ Safety Team

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During this season of giving, it is easy to forget that there are some products out there that make popular gifts, but that can injure or kill an unsuspecting recipient, especially children. Do you know which items make the most popular gifts this holiday season? Of those, do you know which ones may be dangerous? The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) monitors products on the market in the United States and its territories, investigates claims of hazardous products, and issues bulletins informing American consumers of recalls.

At a Town Hall meeting held in New York City, CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum was joined by parents and consumers to talk about toy safety. The discussion centered around new federal safety rules that are in place for toys that will give American consumers greater confidence when they go shopping this holiday season. So far in calendar year 2009, the CPSC has had 38 toy recalls, which is down from 162 in 2008 and 148 in 2007. For 2008, the Commission has reports of 19 toy-related deaths and about 172,700 hospital emergency room treated toy-related injuries to children under 15.

There are hundreds of recalled products that could potentially injure you or your family members if you own one and are unaware of a safety defect. More information on specific products can be found on the CPSC website ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)).

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## **Activities Safety** By the National HQ Safety Team

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The holiday season and winter provide a beautiful frozen landscape for cold weather activities. Does your unit have any morale-building winter bivouacs planned? Do you have members who participate in extreme winter sports? There are many hazards inherent in winter activities and CAP members must know the regulations about what is and is not allowed on CAP activities, as well as practice ORM both on and off volunteer duty.

We'd like to quickly review the provisions of two key CAP regulations that address activities: CAPR 52-16 (The Cadet Program) and CAPR 77-1 (Operation and Maintenance of Civil Air Patrol Vehicles).

CAPR 52-16 has an entire section (1-4) set aside for safety policies specific to the cadet program. Paragraph "c" states that there will be no firearms, air guns, or any device that could be used as a weapon at any cadet activity. The only exceptions are deactivated or facsimile firearms (as in color guard or honor guard props), or firearm training approved in advance by the wing commander. If your activity does not include those two approved exceptions, then firearms or weapons are prohibited.

Next, parachuting and ultralight vehicles are prohibited at CAP activities. Obstacle courses are allowed, provided they meet strict planning and precaution requirements outlined in paragraph 1-4f.

CAPR 77-1 is the next stop on our activities review. There are recent changes that govern the use of golf carts (gasoline and electric) at CAP activities. Make sure you review the regulation so that your activities are in strict compliance.

Golf cart-type vehicles may be authorized by commanders only at wing, region, or national-level activities, on a case-by-case basis (that means risk assessment for each instance should be performed). Golf

carts and their derivatives are prohibited at group and squadron activities. Cadet use of golf-type utility vehicles will be restricted to cadets 18 years of age or older with verification of a valid state driver's license, and then only with the wing/region/national commander's approval (as required). There will be no other cadet passengers in or on any vehicle when being operated by a cadet.

The use of ATVs is strictly limited and cadets are not authorized to operate any ATV-type vehicle.

Those are just a few of the considerations you must keep in mind when you plan or execute CAP activities. When you come across a situation that is not covered by the regulations, then you must remember to use deliberate ORM to identify, evaluate, and mitigate hazards. For those situations that are expressly forbidden by regulation, you do not have the option to disregard the regulations just because you believe you can mitigate the risk to an acceptable level. So, those are the two takeaways from this lesson; obey the regulations and, in instances that are not covered by regulation (or local law), use deliberate ORM in your activity planning. Please, have safe and successful operations during the holiday season and into the next year!

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## **Cold Weather Survival Kits** By the National HQ Safety Team

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It is freezing outside and the gray sky is threatening snow, or...even worse...sleet and freezing rain. But it is so warm in your car and you are ready to begin your holiday travel. You did everything correctly: Full tank of gas...check; tire tread inspected and pressure verified...check, check, check and check! Cell phone battery has a fresh charge...check; enough mp3s on the iPod® so you don't have to listen to the FM static...check. Comfortable driving clothes; shorts, sandals and T-shirt...check. Outside air temperature 28°F...check. You are ready to pull out of the driveway.

What did you do wrong?

Where is your winter driving survival kit? "My WHAT?" you ask incredulously! You have done so much correctly, but your planning is not flawless. You have dressed for the environmental conditions in your car which, if everything goes according to plan, will keep you comfortable in the upcoming hours.

But consider this scenario: On the most desolate portion of your journey, you come upon a slick part of the road in a turn and slide to the shoulder where you get stuck. The threatening snow arrives and begins to cover your car. Your car is nearly covered by snow and you begin to feel light-headed with a nagging headache. You realize that carbon monoxide might very well be flooding the passenger compartment because the tail pipe is covered with snow. You shut off your engine. Now you are getting cold. You look at your

cell phone. There is no signal out in the wilderness. A couple hours later you try to restart your car, but the engine will not turn over. You have  $\frac{3}{4}$ -full tank of gas, 4 brand-new tires perfectly inflated, and a fully-charged cell phone that are all useless. Do you think this is fictitious, or is the scenario imitating real life? In this case, the same scenario has played out far too often. Sometimes entire families have met a tragic end because of poor planning and the "*it can not happen to me*" mentality. But these are the holidays and we will not stand for a tragic ending to this story.

Here is what really happened to you: You kept your comfortable driving clothes on. But you packed a winter driving survival kit containing some water, granola bars, long underwear, long pants, a sweater, blankets and a parka. You also remembered a pair of snow boots, gloves, a watch cap and some miscellaneous equipment (like an ice scraper for the windows and a folding shovel). You told your relatives what your route of travel was going to be, and you let them know when you departed your home so they would have an estimate of when to expect you.

When you did not arrive at the appointed hour, your friends and family alerted emergency personnel who began looking for you. Meanwhile, you put on various clothes using the layer principle so that you would not get cold or overheated. You had food and water to last overnight and in the morning the storm subsided. You were able to get yourself out of the car, where you set about making a signal to alert searchers of your presence. You were rescued a few hours later but your car was stuck for another week!

The main point of this article is that you should not plan or prepare for a perfect set of circumstances. You need to identify hazards, assess the risks, and take positive steps to reduce those risks ***IF*** you happen to encounter them on a cold, dark, snowy night! Proper use of deliberate ORM leads you to assemble a driving survival kit appropriate to your worst-case environment. You will be safe by being prepared. You will be prepared by practicing ORM and common sense! Just remember that ***LUCK RUNS OUT***, but **ORM IS GOOD FOR LIFE!**

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## **Counterfeit Products** Adapted from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Department of Commerce

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As if we don't have enough to worry about living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some unscrupulous factories are trying to kill us. Can you spot a fake? Do you care?

Counterfeit products and product piracy cost the U.S. economy between \$200 and \$250 billion per year and are the reason 750,000 American jobs have been lost. But, there is a more sinister side to product counterfeiting that is causing injury and death in every industry from shampoos and batteries to car parts, prescription drugs and electrical equipment. Cheap knock-offs not only cause pain, suffering,

and death, but they erode confidence in markets and legitimate products. There have been recent cases where electrical cords were seized with fake “UL-approved” holograms attached to the wire. This is enough to throw even the most safety conscious of us into a tailspin during the holidays, when temporary electrical cord use increases dramatically and our circuit breakers are on the verge of overload.

There are other fake products that may be manufactured using toxic substances, or which produce toxic substances as a byproduct of their manufacture. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the International Trade Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, here are ten easy steps you can use to detect or prevent purchasing counterfeit products and keep your home, office or CAP squadron building safer:

1. Scrutinize labels and packaging – look for missing or expired “best before” dates, broken or missing safety seals, unusual packaging, or misspelled words in the ingredients list.
2. Seek authorized retailers – you can generally check a company’s website for a listing of authorized retailers that carry the line of products that interest you. Fakes are less likely to get into the supply chain of an authorized reseller (though sometimes they can).
3. Look for missing sales tax charges – businesses that are part of criminal enterprises generally do not report the sales of goods they know to be counterfeit. If your sales receipt is missing a sales tax line where there should be one, then you should be suspicious.
4. Insist on secure transactions – be very suspicious of companies that do not practice customer credit card security either in a traditional store or on-line. Only pass your personal information over a website if the address begins with <https://> (“s” stands for secure) and you see a little locked icon in the bottom corner of your browser window. Merchants that participate knowingly in selling fraudulent or pirated products will not be careful with customer information.
5. Look for quality assurance in the secondary market, which includes used or discontinued products from a reseller – merchandise bought in this market is tougher to validate, but you can question the merchant about their suppliers and secure guarantees or warranties about product authenticity.
6. Report questionable spam and faulty products to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission by calling 1-800-638-2772 or by going online at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>. You may be able to get a refund or exchange at the location you purchased the item, but you will definitely get the word out to your fellow consumers.
7. Be vigilant when buying products overseas – in many locations, counterfeit products are even more prevalent than in the United

States. If you bring a counterfeit product back into the country after traveling abroad, it will probably be confiscated.

8. Teach young people about counterfeits – from both a safety standpoint and a “buyer beware” standpoint, children should be educated beginning at a young age about the pitfalls and dangers of purchasing questionable products. Two web resources you can access to learn more information are: [www.ftc.gov/privacy/privacyinitiatives/childrens.html](http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/privacyinitiatives/childrens.html) and [www.uspto.gov/go/kids](http://www.uspto.gov/go/kids).

9. Warn friends and family about illegitimate product sources – talk to your social circle to warn them of questionable products and merchants you have discovered. They can do the same with you and you also can spread word of reliable or reputable merchants you have found.

10. Trust your instincts – if it seems “too good to be true,” it probably is. A 100-foot outdoor 12-gauge electrical cord can not be purchased for \$1.99 at a dollar store. A 22-foot artificial Christmas tree with lights and ornaments cannot be purchased for \$5.98. Be suspicious of deals that are just too out-of-place. If the products look like they might have fallen off a truck in the middle of the night, they may be hot or they may be counterfeit. While you might be willing to take a chance on buying a fashion knock-off, you shouldn't. And it is extremely dangerous to purchase a knock-off that carries electricity or performs some other mechanical task. Use common sense and walk away from the deal. For more information, you can visit [www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com](http://www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com).

Please be careful when purchasing products this holiday season. If you try to get something for near-nothing, you may find that the great deal you got two days ago ends up burning down your house, or worse.

Here are some websites where you can learn more:

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/money/shopping/shopping-tips/counterfeit-products-1-08/overview/counterfeit-ov.htm>

[http://www.stopfakes.gov/pdf/Consumer\\_Tips.pdf](http://www.stopfakes.gov/pdf/Consumer_Tips.pdf)

<http://money.aol.com/special/spot-the-counterfeit-products-quiz>

<http://www.counterfeitscankill.com/>