



City plows tackle the streets last year, clearing snow to increase driver safety. (Montrose Daily Press file photo)

## Winter vehicle safety

A spring snowstorm hit Colorado March 23, 2016, dropping over 2 feet of mountain snow, being pushed by 50 mph winds. This spring storm forced the closure of certain parts of I-70 throughout the state.

The storm stranded over 200 motorists in their vehicles for upwards of eight hours. Fortunately, everyone survived, as the Colorado National Guard driving Humvees rescued many.

In December 2006, a similar snowstorm hit Colorado. The storm dropped 3 feet of snow in the mountains leaving thousands of motorists stranded in their vehicles. Six people died, and many others suffered from hypothermia and frostbite.

Many of us drive our four-wheeled sleighs on seldom driven roads in the mountains. Winter has been slow to come to Montrose but it is active in the high country. Now would be a good time to make sure the family vehicle is up to the task.

There are a number of basic things that should be checked first. Start with a good set of tires, with a proper tread for snow, aired up to the proper inflation. A set of skid chains and a shovel would be good to have with you.


Plenty of washer fluid, a winter blend that will not freeze, and good winter wiper blades are a must. I forgot once, to get rid of the summer blend, and had a plastic tank full of a blue ice cream, which

was useless for cleaning the spray off the windshield. Always try to keep the gas tank near the full mark in case you get stuck and need to run the vehicle for warmth.

Batteries love to die in cold weather. The old battery that worked well all summer will pick a cold and snowy time to fail. Have your mechanic perform a load test to make sure your battery will get you through the winter.

Once the maintenance of the vehicle is set, do a little preparation in case something goes wrong. These storms can hit quickly with wind driven snow, causing whiteout conditions. This can force you to stop on the side of the road and your car can become hopelessly buried by drifting snow. Having some survival items with you is imperative, especially when traveling on our back roads and passes.

Carry some extra heavy clothing and footwear for everyone with you. A vehicle is not insulated very well and the temperature will drop very quickly inside if you are stranded. Do not to stray away from your car. Your chances of walking out in a blizzard, and living to tell about it are very slim. It is better to bundle up and stay put until help arrives. A couple extra wool



**Tips from the Posse**

*By Mark Rackay*

blankets in the trunk will keep you warm.

If you choose to run the engine for warmth, try keeping it five to 10 minutes per hour. Be certain that the exhaust area is clear so the deadly fumes do not come into the car.

Another idea would be to carry a survival candle with you. These can last for many hours and you would be surprised how much heat one can give off in an enclosed compartment.

Prepare a small survival kit and keep it in the vehicle all winter. The kit should contain such things as a small first aid kit that includes any needed prescription drugs. A flashlight with extra batteries could come in handy as well. I would put the lithium batteries in it, as they are more tolerant against leaking in the cold. Regular alkaline batteries do not hold their power much below the freezing mark and I have ruined many a device because of their leaking.

Your body burns quite a few calories when fighting off the cold so a stockpile of nonperishable food and drinking water can help with the hunger pains. You may be stranded for quite a few hours and having plenty of food makes the wait much more tolerable, especially if you have children with you.

All of these items can pack neatly in a

plastic tub or two. I realize that they can take up space, which is limited at best in a vehicle. Packing wisely and carefully in these containers can help reduce the space needed. Once you have your kit assembled, leave it in your vehicle until winter is over. You never know when a storm will hit or where you will be when it does. The kit does little good sitting at home. If you have multiple vehicles, make a kit for each.

If you do find yourself stranded in your vehicle, there are a few other things you can do. Piling some snow on the car can provide a good deal of insulation. Be sure to keep the hood clear of snow because the color contrast of your hood will help rescuers see your vehicle from the air. If you are like me, and have a white vehicle, tie a blaze orange cloth to the antenna. This provides the contrast that even ground searchers can see.

Winter is a fun time to enjoy the mountains in Colorado. Being prepared for the unexpected is part of being a Coloradoan because you never know when Mr. Murphy is going to pay you a visit.

*Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and an avid hunter who serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse, call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org.*

One Nation.  
One Mission.  
Many Opportunities.



**NOW HIRING**  
**Transportation Security Officers at**  
**Telluride Regional Airport (TEX)**  
No Experience Required  
**Part-time pay rate starting at \$19.54 per hour**  
(includes 15.37% locality pay)  
**PLUS**  
**Federal benefits • Paid, ongoing training**

TSA offers an attractive benefits package including: health, dental, vision, life and long-term care insurance; retirement plan; Thrift Savings Plan [similar to 401(k)]; Flexible Spending Account; Employee Assistance Program; personal leave days; and paid federal holidays.

Please apply through **February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
online at: **<https://tsajobs.tsa.dhs.gov>**  
or text **"TSO"** to **95495** or call **1.877.872.7990**

@CareersatTSA

TSA

U.S. Citizenship Required

Equal Opportunity Employer

Standard Messaging and Data Rates Apply

EN0196837



**BUILDING INSPECTOR**

The City of Ouray is seeking a part-time Building Inspector. Part time hours may increase during summer season. See position requirements in job description on our website @ [cityofouray.com](http://cityofouray.com). Pay range \$22.78-27.33/hr.

See [www.cityofouray.com](http://www.cityofouray.com) for application forms or pickup application packet at City Hall office.

For info email [hr@cityofouray.com](mailto:hr@cityofouray.com) or call 970-325-7062.

Application form must accompany resumes and be received at City Hall by February 6, 2018 @ 4pm.

You may submit by email to [hr@cityofouray.com](mailto:hr@cityofouray.com), mail to **Box 468, Ouray, CO 81427**, or fax to 970-325-7212.

The City of Ouray is an Equal Opportunity Employer.