

*NEWS RELEASE from the Maine Department of Public
Safety
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In the wake of four weather related highway deaths this week, the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety is reminding drivers that the winter weather has arrived in Maine, and with it unpredictable driving conditions. Three people died in two snow related crashes in Waldo County this week and a Brunswick man died walking across the street after dark in the rain.

“There are more than 7,000 crashes reported each winter in Maine, which accounts for 20% of all Maine’s crashes annually”, said Lauren Stewart, Director of the Bureau of Highway Safety. “Crash activity is the highest in December because of the winter conditions and the best advice we have is to slow down as drivers need additional time to adjust to ice, snow and slush conditions.”

During the past five years, there has been an average of 14 highway fatalities during December.

Highway Safety offered the following tips for driving on Maine roads during the winter months --

- **Slow down and keep a safe distance between other vehicles. If the road is wet or slippery it does not provide the grip your tires need. Reduce your speed as needed based on road conditions.**
- **Weather conditions can change drastically on winter days. Be cautious of "black ice" that forms when wet surfaces freeze.**
- **Always scrape all your vehicle’s windows and clear the snow from all its surfaces, including headlights and brake lights.**
- **Keep emergency equipment (such as a blanket, extra gloves, shovel, jumper cables and sand or kitty litter) in your car at all times. These items could be a lifesaver in a bad weather breakdown.**
- **Proper maintenance of your vehicle is especially important during cold weather months. Be sure you have sufficient anti-freeze and wiper fluids and keep your gas tank full.**
- **Watch for people and equipment working to clear snow and ice from the roadways, walkways, driveways and parking lots**