



Kingman County Commission

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Be prepared when traveling this holiday season

Cooler weather is here, the leaves have turned and the holiday season is right around the corner. With the holidays come family gatherings and travel, making this the time to ensure you are prepared for bad weather before hitting the road.

Few can forget the back-to-back, record-setting snowstorms of February 2013. Should bad weather strike this winter and you or those you love become stranded, a vehicle disaster kit could help you survive until rescued, said Fred Simon, Kingman County director of emergency management.

Simon said items to include in a vehicle supply kit are flashlight and extra batteries, maps, small first aid kit, tire repair kit, air pump, jumper cables, flares or warning triangles, bottled water and non-perishable food. In addition, during the winter months drivers should carry blankets or sleeping bags, hat & gloves or mittens, extra coats, small shovel, sand or kitty litter for traction, ice scraper & snow brush, and a florescent distress flag. Most of these items are readily available at retailers, with some found at auto supply stores.

If you become stranded in a vehicle, experts suggest running the engine for 10 to 15 minutes every hour. Make sure the exhaust stays clear of snow and debris, but keep a window cracked open when the engine is running. The exhaust system may be damaged, or may have become damaged if the vehicle slid off the road. Such damage could allow carbon monoxide into the vehicle.

Stay with your vehicle. Your chances of being found are far greater, plus your vehicle gives you shelter from the elements.

Use caution when traveling. Checking the weather is perhaps the most important thing you can do. Delaying or canceling travel plans may be the best option. You can check current road conditions in Kansas by calling 511 or online at 511.ksdot.org.

Winter also can be hard on your four-legged friends. Remember to protect your pets with a place to go that's out of the wind and that has plenty of warm, dry bedding. Check water bowls frequently to be sure they are not frozen and in extreme cold, bring pets inside.

A bit of extra planning and preparation can go a long way to a healthy and happy holiday travel season.

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