Winter Car Emergency Kit Checklist 2026

Items named by Ready.gov and the National Weather Service, with the page that names each

PACK IT, TICK IT

Getting unstuck

- [ ] Jumper cables (Ready.gov car and winter pages)
- [ ] Sand or cat litter for traction (Ready.gov, NWS)
- [ ] Shovel (NWS storm kit)
- [ ] Ice scraper (Ready.gov car page)
- [ ] Windshield scraper and brush (NWS storm kit)
- [ ] Tow rope (NWS storm kit)

Staying warm

- [ ] Blanket (Ready.gov car page)
- [ ] Warm clothes (Ready.gov winter page)
- [ ] Blankets or sleeping bags (NWS storm kit)

Food and water

- [ ] Bottled water (Ready.gov winter page)
- [ ] Non-perishable snacks (Ready.gov winter page)
- [ ] High-calorie non-perishable food (NWS storm kit)
- [ ] Water container (NWS storm kit)

Light, signals and power

- [ ] Flashlight with extra batteries (NWS storm kit)
- [ ] Car cell phone charger (Ready.gov car page)
- [ ] Flares or reflective triangle (Ready.gov car page)
- [ ] Map (Ready.gov car page)
- [ ] First-aid kit (NWS storm kit)

Before you drive

- [ ] Keep a full tank of gas (Ready.gov car and winter pages)
- [ ] Winter tires with enough tread, or local chains or studs (Ready.gov)

Write in your own

Roadside help number _____

Who to tell your route to _____

Good to know

- Trapped in your car? Ready.gov: stay inside.
- NWS Sterling: run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat, and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

My notes

Source: Ready.gov, Car Safety and Winter Weather pages; National Weather Service, winter storm kit and Winter Preparedness on the Road.