

Driving in Colorado

Colorado's terrain and weather challenge both drivers and vehicles. Pay close attention to weather warnings or watches and make sure your vehicle is in top shape -- especially the steering, suspension and brakes. A good set of all-season radial tires is a must.

Snow routes are posted both on and off base. Snow routes receive priority for plowing and sanding, making them the safest roads to use during inclement weather.

When driving up hills, slower-moving vehicles are required to stay in the right lane to keep the passing lane clear. If you meet oncoming traffic while on a narrow mountain road, the vehicle going uphill has the right-of-way unless it is close to a turnout.

In Colorado, effective as of December 2009, drivers may not use cell phones while driving unless equipped with hands-free devices.

Winter Safety

If you will arrive at the Academy during the winter months, ask your sponsor to send an Academy snow route map in your welcome package. During inclement weather, only portions of the base's roads are open for traffic. Additionally, winter weather can bring poor visibility and slippery roadways. Here are some tips to reduce your chances of being involved in an accident:

- Take your time and be patient.
- Pick up speed slowly. Accelerating too quickly can cause your vehicle to lose traction.
- Never slam on the brakes, as this can cause them to lock and result in loss of steering control. Instead, squeeze the brake pedal down until you feel they're about to lock up, then let off the brake and squeeze again. For those with anti-lock brakes, press evenly on the brake pedal and let the vehicle's braking system control your stop.
- Keep plenty of distance between your vehicle and the car in front of you. Colorado spreads crushed stone on roadways to enhance traction, but this can result in cracked windshields if you follow the vehicle in front of you too closely.

In addition, check your vehicle for the following:

- Under the hood: Check the cooling system, windshield washer system, battery and connections, the air filter, the oil and the oil filter.
- Outside the car: Check the tires and windshield wiper blades.
- In the trunk: Carry a shovel, chains, a bucket of sand, flares, defroster sprays, jumper cables, tow rope and an orange or yellow streamer for your antenna.