



## **SAFETY TIPS WHEN DRIVING IN DANGEROUS WEATHER**

We have compiled the following information developed by several government agencies including the City of Fort Collins Office of Emergency Management, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIARA) in order to provide you with possible actions to take during a crisis, such as a tornado, hail storm or blizzard. We recommend that you take whatever action is necessary to maintain your safety.

### **Tornadoes**

If you are in the path of a tornado in an urban area:

- Do not try to out-drive the storm; abandon your vehicle as soon as possible. Find a safe refuge, such as a concrete building, and get inside, away from windows and preferably under something sturdy.
- If an appropriate shelter is not nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, culvert, excavation or ravine, and cover your head with your hands. You will be safer here than in your vehicle. Make sure you are not in a spot where your car can roll over you.
- Highway overpasses should not be used for shelter, except as a last resort. If you must use an overpass for shelter, pull your vehicle completely off the roadway. Wedge yourself between the steel rafters and where the dirt berm meets the road.

If you are in the path of a tornado in a rural area:

- If the road and traffic volume permit, and you are still a reasonable distance away, try to drive out of the tornado's pathway.
- If your road options are too limited, there is too much traffic or you do not know which way the tornado is moving, follow the advice above for city dwellers.

### **Large Hail**

- If there's a safe place to stop nearby (like inside a garage, under a highway overpass or beneath a service station awning), do so. Make sure to pull off the highway completely.
- Do not seek shelter under a tree; it's common for trees to lose their branches during severe storms.
- Stay inside your car until it stops hailing. Your vehicle will provide reasonable protection.
- Move away from your car windows; if possible, lie face down on the floor or on the seat with your back to the windows, and cover your eyes. If you have small children, protect them by keeping them underneath you, and be sure to cover their eyes, too.

### **Blizzard**

- Stay in your vehicle as disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and bitter cold. People have been lost within a hundred feet of their vehicle.

- Run the motor about ten minutes every half hour for heat, but:
  1. Open the window slightly for fresh air and to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
  2. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked
- Make yourself visible to rescuers:
  1. Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine
  2. Tie a colored cloth to your antenna or door
  3. Raise the hood after the snow stops to indicate trouble
- Exercise from time to time to keep blood circulating and stay warm—vigorously move your arms, legs, fingers and toes.