

# May Be Considered Necessary!

## Gearing Up for Winter TSD Rallies

Ah, winter. The snow is falling, the bears are hibernating, and rally enthusiasts from California to Alaska, and everywhere in between, are gearing up for the 34th Thunderbird event on February 19th and 20th.

With the sup regs up and the entries pouring in, teams all over are preparing their cars for two days of rally in the snow and ice of Interior British Columbia. For those new to winter rally, and for those who are well versed in car vs. snow bank physics, I have compiled a list of additional gear that can give you a competitive advantage in winter conditions.

The first thing you need to do is check that you have all of the equipment listed in the sup regs at [www.rallybc.com](http://www.rallybc.com). Check your fire extinguisher to make sure it hasn't gone off accidentally in your trunk or lost its charge in any fashion. Also, make sure your first aid kit is up to par. You can find the new rules for first aid kits at <http://www.rallybc.com/archives/2005/2005FirstAidKit.htm>. Now that you have that finished, let's move on to the additional things you're going to want to have for winter rallies.

Some of the recommended equipment for T-Bird is a set of four studded snow tires, a map light, driving lights, warm clothing, a shovel, a tow rope, and an ice scraper. These are great suggestions, but I'm going to take them one step further.

Chances are, you're not going to be able to fit a full-sized snow shovel into your trunk. There are tons of shovels on the market that are collapsible and some that are compact versions of square snow shovels. The compact shovels can move a lot of snow with each scoop, which is good, but they are often expensive. Most collapsible shovels have weak joints that become loose and are more frustration than they are worth, but they fit easily in the trunk. I found this one at Lee Valley online for \$27.50 CAD, it's tight, solid, and folds up nicely to fit in my trunk box. Best of all, it has a really wide handle at the top so it can be used wearing thick gloves. Check it out at [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com) under gardening/speciety shovels.

Speaking of thick gloves, make sure you pack a set of them and a toque (a knit cap for our friends south of the border). You won't believe how many teams show up without proper winter clothing.

It's an excellent idea to have good towrope in your car. They're not very expensive and you will need it one day. A quick idea is to purchase a couple of different sized turnbuckles from a hardware store. They are relatively inexpensive, but may get you out of a ditch faster when you find out that your towrope fastens easily to your bumper, but not so well to the sweep vehicle.

If you can afford it, there are lots of things you can pack along to help you in the flat tire department. Most cars come with a stock scissor jack, which is great, but really hard to position in the snow. Last year we invested in a 2000 lbs. hydraulic jack with a wide base that fits in the trunk just fine and makes propping up the car much easier.

Again, if you've got the cash or the hook-ups, a cordless impact wrench is an awesome tire-changing accessory. If you have an impact wrench, a simple trick is to have a lug nut welded onto the cam of your standard scissor jack. If you can get your hands on this setup, you can change tires like a pit crew. Going right along with this, try keeping a full-sized spare instead of a donut. Donuts don't work so well in the winter unless you have four of them.

If you can't afford a hydraulic jack and/or a cordless impact wrench, you should be able to afford a cross lug wrench. You can get these from any automotive retailer for around \$25 bucks. Seeing as there are four different lug socket sizes on these wrenches, we marked our socket with yellow tape. If you use the wrong socket, you could strip your lug nut, and that's bad.



Here is quick list of things to keep tensions down in-car during Thunderbird:

A good flashlight. This is a necessity especially on a night rally or a winter rally when the sun goes down early. It can also help if the wiring on your map light fails.

Gum. Both drivers and co-drivers get the worst "been in a car for 600 kms breath." A little minty freshness goes a long way.

Duct tape. Trust me, you're going to need to MacGyver something in your car at some point, like a muffler or a window molding.

Vaseline and antacid. These two companions are small and go a long way to team comfort. After being in a car all day or not sleeping-in the day before a night rally, your eyes get dry. Dump a few artificial tears in your eyes to keep them fresh. The antacid is great to have after all the bumping and jostling.

Anti-diarrhea medication. Tempers flare when one of you has to take a time out. Plus, it can get to be around minus 20 Celsius around Merritt in February. That reminds me, pack some toilet paper too, just for safety.

Water, and lots of it. Keep a bottle or a camelback handy at all times, water helps keep you alert.

Napkins/Wet Naps. Some drivers like to eat buffalo wings in the car. Plus, napkins can mop up melting snow from leaky sun roofs or window seals.

Time calculating calculator. You can download and print off the sheet for converting hundredths into minutes and stick it on your clipboard, (which I suggest you do anyway) or you can shell out \$80 for a Time Master II, model #9126. This bad boy calculates time for you and is available in Surrey from Jubilee Rose Enterprises. Check it out on the web at [www.jubileeRose.com](http://www.jubileeRose.com).

Good luck and I'll see you at T-Bird!

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