

IT'S SNOW TIME.

Jerry Spette

Well, here we are approaching winter. When some snow arrives and there is a lovely blanket on the ground, there will be many gorgeous images out side, but exposures can be tricky. What we want, is to see texture in the snow, but at the same time, keeping it white. That little meter gremlin in our cameras wants all exposures to end up medium gray, so when shooting a scene where the snow fills most of the frame, we should remember to open up 1.5 to 2 stops of light above the meter's reading to keep the snow white. Use the camera's EV compensation dial. In other words, overexpose the snow to render it white instead of gray. Also, to get a more accurate reading from our camera's meter we can measure the light reflected off a gray card or similar object ie: street, rock, building, etc. Or, measure off the palm of a hand (filling the frame) and then open 1 stop. We must further insure that the light we are metering is the same as that falling on the snow area you are shooting. During the late daylight hours when the light turns nice and warm, the snow takes on a magical look and can probably be metered accurately with little or no compensation. Of course, bracketing is the way to insure proper exposures for you purists. Also, don't forget to convert to B&W for some of your images. I always use a PL (polarizer) filter for those bright blue cloud filled winter skys.

Camera batteries can quickly run out of power in the colder temperatures. Keep the extra battery in a pocket near your warm body. It is also a good idea to keep your camera and lens inside your coat to keep them warm.

Don't forget, when you come in from the bitter cold, you must let your camera and lens(s) warm up slowly to prevent condensation from forming. Keep it in the cold camera bag, then let the car slowly warm them up.

Happy shooting
Jerry