



Organizational and Safety Solutions

Inclement Weather Driving Tips

Background

We all know that poor visibility and adverse road conditions create hazards all year, but more so during the winter months.

We also know or at least we should know that just driving in good weather is a challenge. One of the main reasons is that we all need to get somewhere quickly and we disregard some of the basic safe driving controls. Those driver habits never change, even during inclement weather or winter weather driving and, therefore we have the perfect STORM for disaster.

The following information if applied by a responsible, reasonable and safe driver will help avoid the storm and allow the driver to get to and from their points of travel safely. Now is the time to prepare, before winter hits us in the face!

Hazards

- Less daylight during winter hours
- Snow, ice and (**black ice**), fog and wet roads lessen traction and can lead to hydroplaning and spinouts
- Spray from truck tires as well as other vehicles on the road reduces all drivers vision
- Overcast and gray skies reduce **contrast and overall visibility**
- Water, ice and condensation on windows and mirrors make it difficult for drivers to monitor clearances
- Wet or even frozen brake parts

Driving Safety Precautions

Perform a **Pre-trip Inspection** to avoid mechanical failures and be sure to check:

- Braking system operation
- Defrosters
- Wipers and windshield washer fluid
- Lights
- Wipe/clean reflectors and light lens, so the vehicle can be seen
- Winter weather equipment (tire chains, window ice scraper, brush/broom to remove snow)
- Pack a winter weather survival bag just in case (water, gloves, hat, and blanket)!
- Be certain all windshields and windows are clear of ice before driving!!

Road Hazards

- Use caution when driving on bridges or concrete highways. **These surfaces are the first to freeze!**
- Don't pass snowplows or sanders/salters, and don't follow them too closely either!
- Watch for falling temperatures and ice or snow spots
- Be aware of joggers; die-hard joggers venture on the street for a better path clear of snow
- Watch for icy spots or other hazards hidden below slushy road surfaces
- Don't turn corners too tightly
- **Signal early**, this allows motorists time to react and adjust!
- Slow down in advance of shaded areas, especially curves! **These areas are cooler and may have ice that is difficult to see.**

Use Headlights

- Fog, snow/wet, overcast conditions, and shorter days all reduce daylight further.
- **Use low beam headlights in fog or snow. This directs the light to the road surface where it is needed.**
- **Headlights are important to help you see (and be seen) during bad weather**

Use Your Head

- Patience can be a challenge in heavy traffic at any time especially during bad weather
- Patience is a virtue!
- Give yourself more time.

Slow Down

- Drive an appropriate speed for the conditions.

- Avoid sudden braking
- Avoid sudden or quick acceleration
- Avoid sudden changes of direction
- Make sure you leave yourself an out for an emergency situation

NOTE: Stay alert and keep your eyes moving for developing conditions is the best way to be ready!

Skidding on Ice or Losing Traction on Wet Roads

- Stay calm
- If the vehicle loses traction and feels like it's floating, gradually slow down! Don't slam on the brakes.
- Know the type of braking equipment your vehicle has: ABS or Non-ABS

ABS Braking System:

- Apply firm pressure when skidding
- **DO NOT Pump your brakes this will prevent the anti-lock system from working as designed!**

No-ABS System:

- Do not slam the brakes
- Gently pump the brakes to maintain better control and prevent wheels from locking

Notice to Drivers

As we know weather conditions can and will change quickly. If the conditions change and you do not feel you can safely travel to your next destination or complete your deliveries safely, contact your manager or the facility immediately.

If you become ill during your trip and cannot complete your deliveries safely please call your manager immediately and advise them of your situation. They will work with you to take the necessary steps.

Remember that the above situations and safety precautions not only apply to operating company trucks, vans and automobiles, but they can also be applied to the operation of personal vehicle.

We want to be certain when operating a vehicle (personal or the company's) all drivers are always thinking about SAFETY!!

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - *The information and suggestions presented by PMA Companies in this risk control technical bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related or other laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter the information and suggestions to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.*

