



WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

November 2019

Winter is just around the corner. Preparing your staff and drivers for winter weather challenges well in advance of its arrival will reduce the stress of this driving season.

Winter weather and driving in snow and ice is difficult. It tests the skills and professionalism of our drivers. We must be mentally and physically ready to support them and get them home safely. There are three core issues connected with operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in winter weather conditions:

- 1. Limited Traction** – friction is the key element in being able to move, stop or maneuver the vehicle. The amount of total friction area on a typical 18 wheeled tractor-trailer is 7.3 square feet. This is an area roughly 3.5 feet wide by 2 feet long, approximately half the size of the top of a standard desk!! This is not much friction area to control or stop 80,000 pounds. “Managing” this limited amount of traction is critical to safe driving in these conditions. Some tips include:
 - SLOW DOWN
 - Drive smoothly - no sudden starts or stops
 - Remember a sliding wheel will try to take the lead and is what leads to most slick road jackknifes
 - Keep your view FAR DOWN THE ROAD. Avoid tunnel vision so you can predict traffic slowing down well in advance
 - Extra following distance is a MUST. Extra space equals extra time to maneuver and avoid other drivers and vehicles
 - Cruise Control – don’t use it when roads are slick
 - Be especially careful when temperatures are in the 32-39 degree range. Black ice can form without warning and the roads will actually only “look” wet. Bridges will be the first to ice without the earth beneath them to insulate them from the air temperature
- 2. Limited Visibility** – comes in the form of poorly cleaned cab windows and mirrors, blowing snow and ice, and passing vehicles kicking up snow and ice in front of your driver and truck. Some tips to address limited visibility include:
 - Clean your windshield, side windows and mirrors before you leave and at every stop. If you can’t see, you can’t drive safely
 - Pre-trip the truck – carry extra fluids, especially wiper fluid. Be certain all hoses and belts are in good condition to not break down and leave you on the side of the road in the cold
- 3. Personal Safety** – staying warm and uninjured during harsh winter conditions. Some tips in this area include:
 - Carry a “winter survival kit” to include: flashlight and extra batteries; non-perishable food and water; extra warm clothes and snow boots; extra blankets; charger for cell phone; first aid kit; and snow broom/ice scraper
 - Watch your step while entering and exiting the cab or on untreated parking lots and sidewalks
 - Dress for weather. Stay dry and wear layers of clothes.
 - Keep the cab comfortable, but not too warm or too cold to assure you are alert when driving

Our customers’ products need to move even in winter months. Some pre-planning and attention to detail will allow us to provide transportation services to our customers safely. Take extra care in winter conditions and come home safely.

Be aware of weather and highway conditions where your drivers are dispatched. Remind them at the close of every call to drive safely in winter weather conditions.