



# Driving In Winter Conditions

## Prepare for the Worst

Even though the weather may not look bad when you head out, things can change in a hurry. Once cold weather hits, it's best to always be prepared for the worst. Have these items on hand just in case conditions go south:

- Vehicle emergency supplies kit and replenish it if necessary.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- Rain gear, extra sets of dry clothing, mittens, socks, and wool hats.
- Plastic bags for sanitation
- Extra food and water. Canned fruit, nuts, and high energy snacks. Include a non-electric can opener if necessary.
- Keep a cell phone or two-way radio with you. Make sure the battery is charged.
- Extra batteries or a charging system.
- Sand or Salt for traction if you are stuck.
- Windshield scraper and windshield fluid.
- Extra wiper blades.
- Plenty of fuel. The extra weight

will make your vehicle easier to control.

- Tire chains.
- Jumper cables.

### Sign Up for Weather Alerts

Checking the weather forecasts before you plan your route could help you to avoid harsh weather. But sometimes conditions will change suddenly.

By signing up for weather alerts on your smartphone or email, you might be able to avoid changing conditions by altering your route. This could also help you to avoid traffic delays or road closures, which can cause big setbacks.

### Check Your Equipment



Most commercial drivers are required to complete a pre-trip inspection of their vehicle. But when conditions are bad, you might want to inspect your vehicle more frequently and take a few extra precautions, including:

- Making sure the weight of your load is evenly distributed. If your product shifts on icy roads, it'll make it more difficult to control your vehicle.
- Treating your fuel - Freezing temperatures often cause diesel fuel to congeal. Treat your fuel with an anti-gel once cold weather hits.
- Making sure your headlights, brake lights, and hazard lights are clear of snow whenever you stop.
- Maintain as much visibility as possible by keeping your windows and mirrors clean and free of ice.

*If conditions get really bad, don't let the pressure of delivering your shipment on time get in the way of your judgment. Whenever driving conditions become unsafe, pull off the road and wait. Pushing through on roads that haven't been plowed or a storm that's taken a turn for the worse will cause more problems in the long run than reaching your destination a little late.*



## Watch for Trouble Spots

When it's raining, snowing, or the temps are below freezing, the roads will be even more dangerous. In bad weather, take extra caution when you encounter:

- Exit ramps - A turn that's too sharp or taken at too high of a speed could cause you to lose control if the road is slippery.
- Bridges - These surfaces are the first to freeze.
- Black ice - This transparent ice often looks like nothing more than a wet road. Look for these spots when temperatures are near freezing.
- Intersections - Brake early when you see stop signs or red lights.
- Windy areas.

## Maintain Tire Traction

Awareness of speed, accelerations, and braking can help you keep from losing your tire traction on the road when turning and stopping. A few other tips to keep in mind:

- Stay away from the tire tracks of other vehicles - Packed snow is more likely to cause your wheels to spin.
- Make any accelerations gradually.
- Decrease your speed - The higher the speed, the easier it will be to lose your traction.
- Don't use your Jake brake. Since this brake controls only the tractor and not the trailer, taking your foot away from the accelerator can make the trailer slide out and cause a jack knife.

## Control Your Speed/ Avoid Skidding

Ice and snow will decrease the traction of your tires, which will make sudden stops and turns more difficult. To stay safe, decrease

# SAFETY TRAINING SIGN-IN

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Driving in Winter Conditions

The following employees participated in this training.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
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*Ice and snow will decrease the traction of your tires, which will make stops and turns more difficult. Decrease your speed and increase your following distance.*

your speed and increase your following distance. This will give you more reaction time and make hydroplaning less likely. It may also be a good idea to turn off your cruise control and adjust your speed frequently according to the conditions.

Similarly, sudden braking can cause them to lock and your truck to skid. This is never a good idea—and can be especially dangerous in foul weather. If you do begin to skid, remember to:

- Pump the brakes - Locking up your brakes will make things worse.
- Shift to neutral.
- Control the truck by turning the wheel in the direction where you'd like to go.
- At the end of the skid, put the truck in gear instead of coming to a stop.
- Remember to accelerate slowly to keep your traction.

