

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



Winter Driving

December 2019

Driving in winter presents special challenges for all of us. Not only do you have the potential for snow, ice and fog, but you have fewer daylight hours in which to operate. As if that was not enough, other motorists often lack the ability, knowledge, and temperament to safely navigate the roadways in winter driving conditions.

Before you get started, check the weather conditions to know what you may be running into. The more you know, the better prepared you are. And make sure you do a thorough pre-trip inspection to ensure that your equipment is in peak operating conditions paying special attention to tires, lighting, windshield wipers and washer fluids. Once on the road, you need to be prepared, patient and cautious and follow these safe driving rules:

- **Take control** -- It is always your responsibility, as the professional driver, to maintain proper control of your vehicle at all times; no matter the conditions. If the weather and road conditions are too bad for you to continue, stop. You are the captain of the ship.
- **Avoid driving while you're fatigued** – Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
- **Slow down** --Many accidents occur because drivers are going too fast for road conditions. A slower speed gives you more time to react if something occurs.
- **Give yourself extra space** -- Allow for more room between yourself and other vehicles. You should always have enough space and time to move out of harm's way. And avoid using cruise control when driving on what appears to be a slippery surface.
- **Hold your steering wheel firmly** -- Sudden, sharp moves can quickly cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Keep your vehicle steady through ruts in the road, heavy wind and on ice.
- **Brake and accelerate lightly** -- Try not to take any sudden actions – stopping or starting. When you need to slow down quickly in slippery conditions, try lightly pumping your brakes. This reduces your chance of locking your tires and spinning out of control.

Understand also that winter presents challenges beyond your truck? Working in the ice and snow, and even in colder temperatures, requires your full attention and awareness.

- Like you do in your vehicle, slow down when working outside your vehicle.
- During the wintertime, icy running boards, steps, and trailer decks account for thousands of slip-and-fall accidents. While most are relatively minor, every year a few drivers are seriously injured.
- Frostbite is another problem. Many frostbite injuries come from not wearing proper headgear and gloves when you are outside your truck, making deliveries, refueling or conducting your pre/post-trip inspection. The right clothing is the key to staying healthy, injury-free, and behind the wheel.
- A good place to start self-winterizing is with your shoes. Make sure that you wear good quality footwear with oil-resistant soles and some ankle support. You may want to invest in a good pair of boot traction grips.
- Maintain three points of contact to ensure climbing into and out of the truck.
- Pack a change of clothes and a warm jacket.
- Take along some granola bars, dried fruits and nuts, and other high energy good and water or sports drinks in case you get stranded. Hard candy can keep your mouth moist while providing some degree of energy. Avoid salty foods.

Like the Boy Scouts say, "Be Prepared." It could save you a lot of money, not to mention pain.

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