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Driving in Winter Weather Conditions

Driver awareness and knowledge of vehicle components, systems, and operating procedures are important to the trucking professional in normal, everyday driving. They become **critical** when operating in extreme weather conditions. Reduced traction increases stopping distances and decreases maneuverability and control of your vehicle. Reduced visibility from blowing snow means you won't see hazards as soon as you otherwise might, giving you less time to respond in an emergency.

As a professional driver, you must be well prepared when you venture onto the roads during the months ahead. In addition to your regular pre-trip and on-the-road inspections, here are some additional items you will need to remember as you head into the winter driving season:

Coolant level and antifreeze concentration

Make sure the cooling system is full and there's enough antifreeze in the system to protect from freezing. This can be checked with a coolant tester designed for that purpose.

Defrosting and heating equipment

Defrosters are an absolute necessity for safe driving—make sure they work. Make sure the heater is working and that you know how to operate it. Check all other types of heaters, such as those in your mirrors, also.

Wipers and washers

Make sure the windshield wiper blades are in good condition. Wiper blades must press against the window hard enough to wipe the windshield clean. Make sure the windshield washer works and there's enough washer fluid in the reservoir. If your wipers fail while you are driving, stop in a safe location and fix the problem before continuing your run.

Tires

Check your tire tread depth every working day. The drive tires must provide enough traction to push the rig over wet pavement and through snow. The steering tires must have traction to steer the vehicle.

Lights and reflectors

Make sure the lights and reflectors on your vehicle are clean. Visibility of lights and reflectors is especially important during inclement weather. Be sure you can be seen!

Windows and mirrors

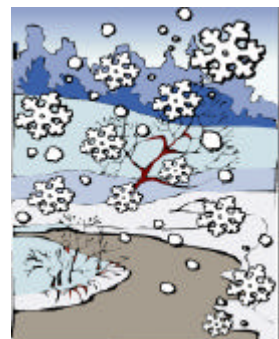
Remove all ice, snow and debris from the windshield, windows and mirrors before driving. Use a windshield scraper, snowbrush, and defroster as needed.

Emergency gear

Always check for basic emergency gear before starting out when adverse weather conditions are present or expected. A windshield scraper and snowbrush are essential.

Don't ignore the need for personal protective gear for your own safety.

Should you be stranded, you'll need drinking water, food, prescription medications (if any), and candles. In an emergency, a burning candle can provide warmth inside a truck. Always pack an extra pair of pants, boots, socks and gloves. A hat and heavy jacket will also come in handy.



Driving in winter weather without properly maintained equipment and emergency gear can be deadly!

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