Winter driving toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.601, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

What is the worst stretch of road you drive in winter, and what makes it so bad?

Why it matters

Snow, ice and early darkness change how a vehicle stops, steers and is seen. Habits that work fine in summer can put you in a ditch or into the back of another vehicle in winter. A little planning and slower, smoother driving are what get you there and back safely.

Key points

1. **Ask if the trip can wait**
   When the roads are bad, the safest trip is the one you do not take. Check the forecast and road conditions before you leave, and ask your supervisor if the trip can be delayed. If you must go, fill the tank, plan your route, tell someone when you expect to arrive and leave extra time so you are not tempted to rush.

2. **Get the vehicle ready**
   Clear all snow and ice from every window, the mirrors, the lights and the roof before you move. Check your tires, battery, wipers, washer fluid and defroster, because a fogged or frosted windshield is like driving blind. On a construction jobsite closed to public traffic, vehicles in use must be checked at the beginning of each shift, and the check also covers lights, windshield wipers and defrosters where that equipment is necessary.
   29 CFR 1926.601(b)(14)

3. **Slow down and leave more room**
   Stopping distances get much longer on snow and ice, so drive well below the speed limit and leave far more space than usual. Speed up, brake and turn gently, because sudden moves can cause skids. Do not use cruise control on slick roads, and keep a steady speed going up hills. If you are pulling a trailer or hauling equipment, go even slower, and watch for other drivers who are going too fast for the conditions.

4. **Watch for black ice**
   Black ice is a thin, clear layer of ice that can look like wet pavement. It often forms first on bridges, overpasses, shaded spots and low areas, especially early in the morning and at night. If the road looks wet and it is near freezing, treat it as ice.

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5 **Know what to do in a skid**

If your vehicle starts to slide, stay calm and ease off the gas. Do not slam on the brakes. Look and steer gently in the direction you want to go. If you have anti-lock brakes and need to stop, press firmly and hold steady pressure, even if the pedal pulses.

6 **Be seen, and be ready if you get stuck**

Turn on your headlights in snow, fog and at dusk so others can see you. On a construction jobsite closed to public traffic, vehicles in use must have at least two headlights and two taillights in operable condition whenever visibility conditions warrant additional light. Carry a winter kit with a scraper, small shovel, blanket, warm clothes, water, snacks, a flashlight and a phone charger, and secure it so it cannot slide around the cab. If you get stuck, stay with the vehicle, call for help and keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow so fumes do not build up inside.

29 CFR 1926.601(b)(2)(i)

Scenario

Picture this: It snowed overnight, and a worker is running late for an early start across town. They scrape a small patch of the frosted windshield, leave snow on the roof and lights, and drive at their usual speed. On a shaded bridge, the truck starts to slide toward the guardrail. What should the driver have done before leaving, and what should they do right now?

Crew discussion

1. Which roads or spots on our routes ice up first?
2. What is in your vehicle right now in case you get stuck?
3. At what point would you decide it is too dangerous to drive, and who would you call?
4. When did you last check your tire tread, battery, wipers and defroster?

Bottom line **In winter, clear every window, slow down, leave more room and plan the trip before you turn the key.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Winter driving / Manejo en invierno

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____

Location / Lugar _____

Company / Empresa _____

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