Winter Driving

While most of your employees live in the mountain environment and understand the concepts of driving on snow and ice, the first few snowstorms sometimes find us unprepared. You also have seasonal employees who aren’t accustomed to the winter environment. It is worthwhile using this subject as a safety topic for all employees, whether they are driving only their personal vehicles and certainly if they are driving company vehicles.

When road conditions are slippery, drivers must look farther ahead to anticipate emergencies and avoid the need for sudden maneuvers. Most skids are caused by last-second stops and turns on slippery pavement. Speed must be reduced on slippery roads.

Extra care must be taken on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop in case the highway isn’t clear ahead. On a downgrade, both loss of traction and gravity are working against you.

Don’t attempt to drive around or through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The same conditions that caused their trouble may still be there when you arrive. When there is no room to get through, you must be prepared to stop.

The lighting system of vehicles becomes especially important during the winter months. Nights are longer and visibility is often reduced by bad weather. Electrical systems are winter-sensitive. Approximately 80% of all light bulb failures are due to environmental reasons. Drivers should inspect their lights more often during the winter and keep them clean to see and be seen by other drivers.

Foul-weather driving is much more strenuous. Drivers need proper rest before every trip, and while en route, fresh air helps keep drivers alert. An open window is an old safety practice—and it helps drivers hear what is going on around their vehicles.

After all precautions are taken and good practices followed, there still will be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Good drivers will pull off the road at the first safe place and wait until conditions improve before continuing.

The holiday season is upon us. With all of the parties comes alcohol. It is important to remember the consequences of drinking and driving. Poor decision making by combining the two can be a life-altering event.

Take Safety On The Road With You

- Don’t rush. Allow enough time for holiday traffic or bad weather.
- Be sure wipers, lights, defrosters, and other safety equipment are working and that you use them in bad weather.
- Check that tires are properly inflated, have good tread, and are all-weather rated. If you live or travel in the mountains, snow tires or even studded-snow tires are a must. Carry chains during the winter months.
- Make sure your battery is charged and working well.
- Top off windshield washer fluid.
- Remove snow and ice from windows, headlights, and taillights.
- Be sure you’re carrying emergency equipment: flashlight, flares, jack, scraper and brush, sand, booster cables, shovel.

Have a Happy Holiday Season!

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