

Winter Driving

Every year when winter arrives, changing our driving habits to adjust to weather and road conditions of snow, ice and sleet can be difficult. Inappropriate speed, reduced visibility, following too closely, sudden acceleration or braking, and poor vehicle maintenance are all contributing factors to a potential incident.

In Manitoba, the weather can be unpredictable. Therefore, it is always a good idea to be prepared before heading out on the road. Some recommendations to consider preparing for are:

Winter Driving Preparation

- Plan your driving in advance.
- Avoid driving when fatigued.
- Before beginning your drive check the weather conditions for your route of travel and driving time.
- Consider postponing the trip in poor weather conditions.
- Plan your destination arrival time by considering any delays due to slower traffic, reduced visibility, roadblocks, abandoned automobiles, collisions, etc.
- Inform someone of your route and planned arrival time.
- Warm up your vehicle before driving off. It reduces moisture condensing on the inside of the windows.
- **NEVER** warm up your vehicle in a closed garage.
- Remove snow and ice from your vehicle. It helps to see and be seen.
- Wear sunglasses on bright sunny days.
- Bring a cell phone if you have one but do not leave it in the car as the battery will freeze.
- Choose warm and comfortable clothing. If you need to remove outdoor clothing later while driving, **STOP** the vehicle in a safe spot

What is the Danger?

Even if you are a seasoned motorist, winter driving poses a challenge to even the most experienced drivers. Keeping your vehicle in good technical repair reduces your overall chances of any mishaps or disasters while driving – particularly in winter weather. To prepare your vehicle for winter driving give it a complete checkup. This includes:

Electrical System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Battery</u> – Recharge or replace if battery is weak. • <u>Ignition</u> – Damaged ignition wires and cracks in the distributor cap. • <u>Lights</u> – Check all lights for proper functioning.
Brakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check brakes to ensure equal braking.
Tires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the condition and inflation of your tires, including your spare. • A legal winter tire MUST have at least 3.5 mm of tread depth and be labeled with the letter “M” or “S”.
Exhaust System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the exhaust system for leaks. • Keep the window in your vehicle slightly open if stuck in the snow. Run the engine and heater to keep warm. • Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow.
Heating/Cooling System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the radiator and hoses for leaks • Ensure that your vehicle has antifreeze rated for the coldest weather. • Check the defrosters (front and back) to make sure they are working efficiently.
Windshield Wipers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the windshield wipers function efficiently. • Fill the washer container with an antifreeze fluid and top it off frequently.
Fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill up the fuel tank before you leave on your trip. • Do not let the fuel level get too low – the car engine may be your only source of heat if you get stuck.



SAFETY TALKS

Winter Driving

Safety Tips

- ✓ Buckle up before you start driving and keep it buckled at all times.
- ✓ Reducing speed is the best precautionary measure against driving incidents on slippery roads. Posted speed limits are for ideal travel conditions.
- ✓ Be alert. Black ice is extremely slippery and will make a road look like shiny new asphalt. Clear pavement should look grey-white in winter.
- ✓ Do not use cruise control. Winter driving requires you to always be in full control.
- ✓ Reduce your speed while approaching intersections covered with ice or snow.
- ✓ Drive with low-beam headlights on. This lighting makes your vehicle more visible and activates the taillights.
- ✓ Lengthen your following distance behind the vehicle ahead of you. The stopping distance on an icy road is double that of a dry one.
- ✓ Stay in the right-hand lane except when passing, and use turn signals when changing lanes. Be patient and only pass other cars when it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Keep a safe distance back from snowplows, and salt/sand/anti-icing trucks. Never pass a snowplow in whiteout conditions and watch for ridges of snow created by the plow.
- ✓ Steer with smooth and precise movements. Changing lanes too quickly and jerky steering while braking or accelerating can cause vehicle skidding.
- ✓ Be aware and slow down when you see a sign warning that you are approaching a bridge. Steel and concrete bridges are likely to be icy even when there is no ice visible on the ground surface.
- ✓ Consider getting off the road before getting stranded if the weather is worsening.
- ✓ When skidding, do not panic! Look where you want your vehicle to go and steer in that direction. Do NOT brake or accelerate.
- ✓ Never operate a vehicle when under the influence of alcohol or drugs that impair driving ability.
- ✓ Wear high-visibility clothing if you must exit the vehicle.

Demonstrate

Review company driving procedures with all employees including inclement weather condition policies.

Develop or review the pre-use inspection checklist for company vehicles.

Discussion

If stranded or in a motor vehicle accident, what is the procedure to follow? Whom would you report to?

What are some reasons that may result in an accident or losing control of the vehicle?

What are some items that belong in a winter emergency kit?





Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation

Part 2 – General Duties

Part 6 – Personal Protective Equipment

Workers Involved in this Safety Talk

Date: _____

Name	Signature

Name	Signature

Notes
