

Winter Driving & Safety

Winter requires extra attention to driving safely and your personal safety.

Let's review some of the critical areas of successfully navigating winter weather and driving as a professional driver.

Limited traction is one of the biggest concerns with winter driving. An area of approximately 7 sq feet is the traction area of an 18 wheel tractor trailer. Any reduction in the grip the truck has on the road will reduce your ability to control the truck.

What can be done? Slow Down – allow extra following distance, even more than you normally would, due to the reduced friction and handling. Watch **FAR DOWN THE ROAD** for changes in traffic speed and conditions. Drive smoothly. No sudden starts or stops. When a wheel loses grip on the road surface from either braking or power, it will automatically try to lead the combination. This is what causes jackknifes.

Limited visibility is another challenge. You must be able to see what is going on around you to adjust your driving to the traffic and environmental conditions. Windshields, side windows and mirrors must be kept clean **AT ALL TIMES**. Most modern trucks have heated mirrors which help with the main mirrors, but many of the convex mirrors are not heated and must be cleaned or treated to prevent ice build-up. The defroster must be working properly and used carefully to keep side windows clean. Carry extra wiper fluid and be sure the washer function is working properly.

Personal safety – cold weather is hard on the human body. You must dress properly to avoid getting cold and wet.

- **Carry a winter survival kit to include:**
 - Flashlight & extra batteries
 - Non-perishable food & extra water
 - Warm clothes & snow boots
 - Extra blankets
 - Charger for your cell phone
 - First aid kit
 - Snow broom & ice scraper

Take extra care when entering or exiting the cab. Snow build-up on steps can cause you to slip and fall, especially if you have driven for several hours and are not moving properly. Test each step in parking lots, especially if not treated or plowed.

Pre-plan your trip, check weather and highway conditions on your route.

Winter conditions present unique challenges as we work and drive. Your focus and preparation on winter safety and driving will bring you home safely.

Thanks for your time and attention to this important Driver Education Topic.

Information provided is advisory in nature.

