

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER



Reading between the lines...

October 2010

Welcome to the October edition of TrueNorth's Transportation Safety News "*Reading between the lines*". In this edition we will discuss the topic of winter and the challenges that it brings to our drivers.

Winter Driving

Winter is just around the corner. Preparing your staff and drivers for winter weather challenges well in advance of its arrival will reduce the stress of this driving season.

Winter weather and driving in snow and ice is difficult. It tests the skills and professionalism of our drivers. We must be mentally and physically ready to support them and get them home safely.

There are three core issues connected with operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in winter weather conditions. They are:

- **Limited Traction**
- **Limited Visibility**
- **Personal Safety (staying warm and uninjured)**

Let's take a look at each of these three areas as we shift our focus to the support of our drivers in winter weather.

Limited Traction – Friction is the key element in being able to move, stop or maneuver the vehicle. The amount of total friction area on a typical 18 wheeled tractor-trailer is 7.3 square feet. This is an area roughly 3.5 feet wide X 2 ft long, approximately half the size of the top of a standard desk!! This is not much friction area to control or stop 80,000 pounds.

"Managing" this limited amount of traction is critical to safe driving in these conditions, i.e. winter!! Some tips include:

- SLOW DOWN
- Drive Smoothly - No sudden starts or stops. Remember a sliding wheel will try to take the lead and is what leads to most slick road jackknives.
- Keep your view **FAR DOWN THE ROAD**. Avoid tunnel vision so you can predict traffic slowing down well in advance.
- Extra following distance is a **MUST**. Extra space equals extra time to maneuver and avoid other drivers and vehicles.

- Be especially careful when temperatures are in the 32-39° range. Black ice can form without warning and the roads will actually only "look" wet. Bridges will be the first to ice without the earth beneath them to insulate them from the air temperature.

Limited Visibility – comes in the form of poorly cleaned cab windows and mirrors, blowing snow and ice, and passing vehicles kicking up snow and ice in front of your driver and truck. Some tips to address limited visibility include:

- Clean your windshield, side windows and mirror before you leave and at every stop. If you can't see, you can't drive safely.
- Pre-trip the truck – carry extra fluids, especially wiper fluid. Be certain all hoses and belts are in good condition to not break down and leave you on the side of the road in the cold!!

Personal Safety - staying warm and uninjured during harsh winter conditions. Some tips in this area include:

- Carry a "winter survival kit" to include: flashlight and extra batteries; non-perishable food and water; extra warm clothes and snow boots; extra blankets; charger for cell phone; first aid kit; and snow broom/ ice scraper.
- Watch your step while entering or exiting the cab or on untreated parking lots and sidewalks.
- Dress for the weather. Stay dry and wear layers of clothes.
- Keep the cab comfortable but not too warm or too cold to assure you are alert when driving.

Our customers' products need to move even in winter months. Some pre-planning and attention to detail will allow us to provide transportation services to our customers safely. Take extra care in winter conditions and come home safely.

Be aware of weather and highway conditions where your drivers are dispatched. Remind them at the close of every call to drive safely in winter weather conditions.

This publication has you, our valued client, as its main focus. Please let us know what subjects you would like us to cover by sending an email to cheath@truenorthcompanies.com.

Information provided is advisory in nature. Final decisions regarding policy changes or risk strategies must be made using trusted and various sources.