

Tips for truckers



Winter: The long haul. Know how to drive safely in winter conditions.

Whether you are a new or seasoned driver, winter roads can be dangerous. Here are a few tips to help you prepare and stay safe at work:

- 1. Watch for black ice.** Black ice is a thin layer of transparent ice that forms when the temperature is close to freezing. Look for ice build up on your windshield; this is a clue that conditions are favourable for black ice to develop. Slow down when approaching shaded areas, bridges and overpasses as these sections of road freeze sooner than others in cold weather.
- 2. Carry a cell phone and make sure it is charged.** Cell phone batteries can freeze in extremely cold weather, so don't leave your phone in the vehicle for extended periods of time.
- 3. Drop your speed to match road conditions.** No matter how much experience you have, the way your truck will move on snow or ice is unpredictable.
- 4. Talk to people.** Listen for road condition and weather updates on your radio and when parked, talk to the drivers around you. We're all a little nervous out there and it helps to know what you're dealing with. Try to find a seasoned driver with a healthy respect for physics to help talk you through it.
- 5. Don't follow too close.** Traffic tends to bunch up on bad roads – the natural inclination is to follow other drivers. Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you.
- 6. Watch for warning signs.** If vehicles are spun out in the median or shoulder, the roads are bad. If you start seeing big trucks spun out, it's time to get off the roadway.
- 7. There is no load worth your life.** If you experience extreme driving conditions, try to find a safe spot to wait it out. Let your logbook gain some hours. If you can't find a spot in a truck stop, park on a ramp or anywhere that is safe and out of the way. Try not to park on an incline, as you may get stuck.
- 8. Make sure you have the supplies you need.** In the unfortunate event that you end up stuck, spun out, wrecked or just sitting in a back up, be sure you have the necessities with you. Keep extra warm clothing, blankets, canned food and water. Be sure to keep your diesel tanks full so you won't run out.
- 9. Treat your diesel.** Diesel gels when it gets really cold. If your diesel gels, your truck won't run. If you are facing winter weather conditions you need to put an anti-gel additive to your tanks (put it in BEFORE you fuel so that it mixes). It is a good idea to stock up ahead of time.
- 10. Commercial vehicles in B.C. must carry chains from October 1 to March 31.** Make sure your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before you need to use them. Otherwise, you may have a cold and frustrating experience on the side of the road. Stop at a weigh station or rest area for the install so you are safely off the road and have some room to drive your rig forward and back.
- 11. Wear sturdy shoes or boots that have good traction.** Snow, ice and cold weather can make even the simplest task treacherous. Maintaining 3 points of contact when entering or exiting the cab will keep you on your feet, especially in winter when steps and the ground below may be icy.

Know before you go.

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