



# WINTERIZING YOUR SAFETY PLAN:

Information for commercial carriers



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As an employer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure the health and safety of workers as set out in:

- **The *Workers Compensation Act***
  - **The associated *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (for trucking firms that operate within BC); or***
  - **Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* and the *Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (for trucking firms that operate inter-provincially)***
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Winter brings its own set of driving challenges. The responses of all road users to changing conditions such as reduced traction, unpredictable weather, cold temperatures and compromised visibility increase the likelihood of a serious motor vehicle incident.

As a carrier operating under the National Safety Code (NSC), you must:

- Educate yourself and all drivers who work under your safety certificate of all National Safety Code requirements
- Ensure all vehicles operated under your certificate are properly inspected and maintained
- Ensure only competent and qualified operators drive your vehicles
- Establish policies for safety programs and ensure that policies are followed

Regardless of the size of your trucking firm, an effective safety program will help you to:

- Meet or exceed compliance requirements and their legal obligations to due diligence
- Reduce the likelihood of a crash that may result in a serious injury or fatality
- Identify unsafe equipment or conditions that may contribute to an accident
- Be able to dispatch drivers and vehicles more efficiently
- Spend less time at roadside inspections, if your vehicle is stopped
- Avoid penalties imposed by WorkSafeBC or the Canada Labour Program and by Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE)

Winter is not business as usual. Establish policies, procedures and practices to address winter-specific trip inspections, driver education and supervision, safe driving practices, journey management, and emergency planning.



## Dispatch\*

- Ensure dispatch operations include procedures for evaluating and communicating current and projected weather and road conditions
- Be prepared to modify dispatch instructions when necessary:
  - o Delay the trip
  - o Adjust driving assignments to ensure compliance with hours of service requirements
  - o Modify routes and plan for emergencies
- Work with customers to reschedule pick-up and delivery times as safety concerns warrant
- Work with your drivers to ensure they can complete the trip in the available hours and given current and expected conditions (driver, vehicle and environmental)
- Assess the risk to drivers. Where risk is high, increase the frequency of check-ins.
- Ensure your drivers monitor location-specific weather and road conditions
- Adjust scheduling during winter months to allow drivers adequate time to arrive

\*Depending on the organization, some or all of these may also be supervisor duties.

## Drivers



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**Drivers must chain up or use their other traction devices when signage indicates.** Failure to do so may result in charges under the *BC Motor Vehicle Act*. The vehicle may be turned back.

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Take steps to ensure drivers are winter-ready. Confirm that drivers:

- Are made aware of all potential safety hazards to which they may be exposed and how to respond to these hazards
- Carry out their work in accordance with:
  - The requirements of the *Workers Compensation Act* and the associated *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* or Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* and the *Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*
  - Your company's written safety policies and safe work procedures or practices
- Understand their duties under the *Motor Vehicle Act* and *Motor Vehicle Act Regulation* and the penalties for lack of compliance regarding use of chains when required
- Know when and how to safely and properly install chains or other approved traction devices in compliance with the *Motor Vehicle Act*
- Know the chain-up / pull-out locations and fuel stops for their routes
- Understand and correctly follow the hours of service extension provisions for adverse weather conditions
- Adjust their speed and driving behaviour to adapt to changing road and weather conditions
- Report defects in any protective equipment, device or clothing, or the existence of any other on road or workplace hazard
- Understand their right and responsibility to refuse unsafe work, which includes operating in unsafe conditions

Ongoing communication and effective supervision are critical to encouraging and instilling good safety habits. For example:

- Ask each driver to demonstrate their ability to properly install chains or use other suitable traction devices.
- Discuss and confirm winter contingency plans with each driver.
- Discuss weather and road hazards along specific routes as a group safety talk.
- Encourage driver participation in safety discussions. Whenever possible, involve experienced drivers in your safety talks to share skills and knowledge.

## Vehicles

Ensure that daily pre-trip inspections during winter include confirmation of:

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On most major highways in BC **commercial vehicles (27,000 kg GVW and greater) must carry chains or other traction devices as early as October 1 and as late as April 30.** Rules are in effect regardless of weather conditions. Lack of chains, or approved traction devices is a *BC Motor Vehicle Act* violation and may bring charges for operating an improperly equipped vehicle. Vehicles may also be turned back.

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- Suitable chains or traction devices in good working order.
- Sufficient coolant, washer fluid and oil levels in suitable condition; cab heater and defroster testing; proper wiper operation and good wiper blade condition; clear windows and mirrors; exterior lights in good working condition and free of mud and snow.
- Fuel level and specification. Winter grade diesel fuel should be used when temperatures warrant.
- Clean working surfaces such as cab steps, which can create slipping hazards from winter moisture and icing.
- Appropriate first aid and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Safely secured winter equipment, including:
  - o Copy of the emergency plan
  - o Suitable wheel chocks
  - o Extra diesel exhaust fluid (DEF)
  - o Emergency warning devices
  - o Spare headlight, turn signal and brake light bulbs and/or lamp assemblies
  - o Air brake antifreeze (used according to the vehicle manufacturers instructions)
  - o Flashlights and spare batteries
  - o Mats, wire brush, wrench pliers, tire chalk (in addition to regular tool kit)
  - o Sufficient emergency food and water
  - o Warm, water-resistant clothing (including head and ear coverings), winter boots, multiple pairs of gloves



You need to ensure all vehicles that you dispatch are properly prepared. Simply asking owner-operators if their vehicles are ready for winter is not enough. Ensure they have a winter contingency plan. Conduct inspections and/or spot checks to confirm vehicles are properly equipped and prepared.

## Joint health and safety committees or worker representatives

- Consult and cooperate with the joint health and safety committee or worker safety representative and encourage their involvement in all aspects of winter driving safety.

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**Employers must establish and maintain a joint health and safety committee as set out in the *Workers Compensation Act* or Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*. (Consult the *Workers Compensation Act* or Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* for circumstances where a worker safety representative is required).**

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### For more Information and resources:

- Visit [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](http://ShiftIntoWinter.ca) for free commercial trucking safety resources, hazard recognition tools, and an easy-to-use employer toolkit to help you winterize your fleet.
- Follow @DriveBC on Twitter or visit [DriveBC.ca](http://DriveBC.ca) for chain-up locations, current weather conditions, and highway cameras.
- For information on the National Safety Code and the duties of carriers and operators, visit [cvse.ca/national\\_safety\\_code.htm](http://cvse.ca/national_safety_code.htm)
- Visit [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com) for information about the *Workers Compensation Act* and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. Contact WorkSafeBC for information on workplace health and safety, to report a serious incident, or to report unsafe working conditions.

**Phone:** 604.276.3100 (Lower Mainland)

**Toll-free:** 1.888.621.7233 (1.888.621.SAFE) (Canada)

- For information about the *Canada Labour Code Part II*, view the summary at [Employment and Social Development Canada](http://Employment and Social Development Canada)
- For information and advice on trucking safety, visit [safetydriven.ca](http://safetydriven.ca)
- For information and advice on log hauling safety, visit [bcforestsafesafe.org](http://bcforestsafesafe.org)