Winter Driving Safety Messages

**Campaign: Shift into Winter 2024-2025**

**Campaign Dates: Sept 9 – Dec 31, 2024; Shift out of Winter Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2025**

The following information is suitable for landing pages, newsletters, e-news, and other communication materials where space is not an issue.

**Target Audience: General Public**

1. **Conditions change. So should your speed. Slow down.**

Winter driving can more than double your risk of being in a crash in BC. Conditions change and so should your speed. Slowing down can save your life – and the lives of others on the road.

Posted speed limits are for ideal driving conditions, during winter weather it’s safer to drive below the posted limit because it takes longer to stop on a slippery road. Look ahead and keep at least 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front. Even the most experienced drivers can’t predict how their vehicle or other drivers will react in rain, snow or on ice.

Plan ahead and learn how to drive safely in winter conditions at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/#safe-winter-driving).

1. **Plan ahead and** [**prepare your vehicle**](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/#prepare-your-vehicle) **for winter driving**

Winter weather is hard on your vehicle and its engine. [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](http://www.shiftintowinter.ca) offers the following tips to make sure that your ride is up to the challenge:

* Every year, give your vehicle a pre-season maintenance check-up. Check your battery, fluids, wipers, lights, brakes, and heating.
* Make sure your vehicle is equipped with a winterized [emergency kit](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/handout/vehicle-emergency-kit-checklist/).
* Install a set of 4 matched [winter tires](https://shiftintowinter.ca/winter-driving-related-information/#winter-tire). Winter tires with the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol offer the best traction for faster stopping time and shorter stopping distance in cold weather, snow, and on ice.
* All-season tires with the M+S (mud and snow) symbol offer better traction than summer tires and meet the minimum legal requirement for a winter tire. But, in severe winter conditions, they are less effective than the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake tires.

1. **Plan ahead and** [**prepare yourself**](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/#prepare-yourself) **for winter driving**

Know how to drive for the conditions before you get behind the wheel. Even the most experienced drivers can’t predict how their vehicle or other drivers will react in rain, snow, or on ice.

* **Slow down to match road conditions**. The posted speed limit is the maximum speed under ideal driving conditions.
* **Maintain a safe following distance.** Look ahead down the road and keep at least 4 seconds of distance between you and the vehicle in front.
* **Accelerate and brake slowly**. On slick roads, start slowly and accelerate gradually to maintain traction and avoid spinning your wheels. When stopping, plan well in advance, apply the brakes gently, and slowly add pressure. Avoid braking suddenly.

Learn more winter driving safety tips at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/#safe-winter-driving).

1. **Know before you go.** If you have to travel, always check weather and travel conditions before heading out at [DriveBC.ca.](https://www.drivebc.ca/) If the conditions are poor, avoid travelling. Even delaying an hour or two can make a difference.

If you have to travel, follow these safe driving tips:

* Make sure your vehicle is winter ready.
* Take the safest route. Check with the local municipality to see which roads have been prioritized for plowing and salting, and avoid driving on steep hills or in flooded area.
* Give yourself extra time to get to your destination.
* Tell someone where you’re going and when you expect to arrive.
* If you get stuck, stay with your vehicle.
* **Have an emergency plan.** If you get stuck or stranded, don’t panic. Stay with your vehicle for safety and warmth. If you have a cell phone and it is an emergency, call 911. Otherwise, call for roadside assistance.

Visit [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/)for more tips on winter driving safety.

**Target Audience: Employees**

In addition to the messages above, the following messages can be used in your internal employee communications channels, as well as in conversations and meetings with employees. Feel free to customize to fit your organization’s policies and process.

1. **You have the right to a safe and healthy workplace, including while driving for work,** regardless of whether you’re driving one of our company-owned or your own personal vehicle, or whether you only occasionally drive for work or are a contract worker.Learn our Winter Driving Safety Policy **<link to your company’s specific policy if one exists>** and follow it. You can also download the free [Winter Driving: What Workers Need to Know Guide](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/guide/winter-driving-what-workers-need-to-know/) at [ShiftintoWinter.ca.](http://www.shiftintowinter.ca)
2. **Determine if driving for work is necessary.**

* Don’t drive if weather conditions are unsafe or worsening.
* Talk to your manager about the options available to eliminate the hazard associated with winter driving. Options include using email, conference calls, or online meetings.
* Cancel, re-schedule, or re-route trips when necessary.
* Check [DriveBC.ca](http://www.drivebc.ca/) for current weather and road conditions.

Find more winter driving information at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/#driving-for-work-in-winter).

**When driving is necessary,** ensure that you:

* Make sure your vehicle is winter ready by completing a winter maintenance check-up and packing an [emergency kit](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/handout/vehicle-emergency-kit-checklist/).
* Plan your route. Check with the local municipality to see which roads have been prioritized for plowing and salting, and avoid driving on steep hills.
* Slow down to match road conditions. The posted speed is the maximum speed under ideal conditions.
* Maintain a safe following distance. Look ahead down the road and keep at least 4 seconds of distance between you and the vehicle in front. You never know when other drivers may brake quickly or cut in.
* Install a set of 4 matched [winter tires](https://shiftintowinter.ca/winter-driving-related-information/#winter-tire). Tires marked with the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol offer better traction compared to M+S (mud and snow) tires and allow for a faster stopping time and shorter stopping distance on slippery surfaces.

To keep yourself safe when driving in winter conditions, follow the guidance set out in the [Winter Driving: What Workers Need to Know Guide](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/guide/winter-driving-what-workers-need-to-know/) at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/for-all-drivers/), as well as in our Winter Driving Safety Policy **<link to your company’s specific policy if one exists>.**

If you are unsure of your ability to drive safely for work in winter conditions, talk to your manager. We value our employees and want everyone to return home safely at the end of their shift.

1. **Commercial drivers: Where and when to chain up safely this winter**

BC’s winter tire and chain regulations for commercial vehicles run from **October 1 to April 30**.

**Vehicles with 11,794 or more kg LGVW:** Must carry steel tire chains on [designated highways](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/driving-and-cycling/traveller-information/seasonal/winter-driving/winter-tire-and-chain-up-routes). These include mountain passes and rural routes in high snowfall areas.

**Vehicles weighing between 5,000 kg and 11,794 kg LGVW:** Must carry chains or acceptable traction devices, unless the vehicle is equipped with [legal winter tires](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/driving-and-cycling/traveller-information/seasonal/winter-driving/commercial). The tires must have either the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol or the M+S (mud and snow) symbol.

In addition to carrying tire chains, commercial vehicle drivers must know:

* When to safely install tire chains or other approved traction devices
* How to properly [install these devices](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKcibc-Qc78)
* Where the chain-up/pull-out locations and fuel stops are on your routes

Your truck could be pulled from the road if not properly equipped. A $109 fine is also possible.

Learn more about [chaining up](https://shiftintowinter.ca/worker-tools/commercial-trucking-resources/chaining-up/) and how to drive safely this winter at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/commercial-carriers/).

**Target Audience: General Public**

**Target Audience: Employers**

1. **It’s time (and good business) to Shift into Winter**

It’s time to start planning your strategies to reduce winter driving risks for employees. Timing is critical as winter is especially dangerous for your staff who drive for work. Nearly 40% of work-related crashes resulting in injury and time off work occur from November through February.

Keeping workers safe is also good business. It leads to reduced organizational costs, and improved business performance. A robust and effective winter driving program lets your employees know you care about their well-being, creating loyalty that will show in the way they do their work and serve your customers. You’ll attract new applicants through positive word-of-mouth and customer satisfaction will rise.

Meeting your health and safety responsibilities is a win for everyone.

1. **Employers and supervisors have a legal responsibility**

Employers and supervisors have [legal responsibilities](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/why-road-safety-matters/#you-have-responsibilities) to ensure the health and safety of employees and contractors when they drive for work. It doesn’t matter how much or how little workers drive. It also doesn’t matter if they drive a company-owned or personal vehicle. Your responsibilities include ensuring employees:

* Are aware of driving hazards and how to assess risks
* Are properly trained for winter driving conditions
* Have the equipment and supervision to stay safe

1. **Be prepared: Plan ahead**

Take time now to develop, update, and implement your winter driving safety [policy and procedures](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/template/sample-winter-driving-policy-and-procedures/). Clearly communicate expectations such as the fact that employees should consider whether driving is absolutely necessary. When employees have to drive, your policy should ensure they are prepared for the situations they may face.

Use [Shift into Winter’s](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/shift-into-winter/employer-and-supervisor-tools/) free resources for employers, including:

* [Winter Driving Safety Planning Tool Kit](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/tool-kit/winter-driving-safety-planning-tool-kit/) for employers and supervisors (tools and resources to help you make your winter driving safety program effective)
* [Winter Driving Safety for Employers and Supervisors](https://roadsafetyatwork.jibc.ca/courses/winter-driving-safety/) online course (helps you prepare before, during, and after winter)
* [Winter Driving Hazards](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/resource/form/winter-driving-hazards/) form (helps you to assess risks such as unpredictable weather, reduced traction, cold temperatures, and limited visibility)
* [Keeping Your Employees Safe During Winter Driving](https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/events/webinar-keeping-your-employees-safe-during-winter-driving/) recorded webinar