

10 Safe Winter Driving Tips



Driving in winter weather conditions poses certain challenges, including slippery roads, reduced visibility, etc. So if your workers drive as part of their duties, ensure that they're prepared to safely navigate the roads this winter.

The RCMP in Nova Scotia prepared these 10 tips for safe driving in the winter. Although they're intended for drivers in general, they apply to any worker who drives on the job. So share these tips with all such workers in your company:

1. Pre-trip preparations

There are steps drivers can take to reduce the likelihood of being involved in a collision during winter weather. The first starts before even getting into the car. Brush the snow from *all* of the windows, side mirrors, headlights and tail lights. Don't just clear a small area on the front windshield and then start driving. It's also important to clear the snow from the hood and the roof. If you don't, it may blow off on the road and create hazardous conditions for anyone travelling behind.

2. Plan ahead

Before heading out, check to see what the current road conditions are and what type of weather you should expect. It's also a good idea to make sure someone is aware of your travel plans, especially during inclement weather.

3. Weigh the importance of the trip against the current weather conditions

When the weather's really bad, police often advise motorists to avoid traveling if possible. So determine whether your trip is really necessary or if it can be postponed until the weather conditions improve.

4. Drive according to road conditions

If the roads are slippery, it'll take more time and distance to stop. So slow down. It's also important to leave a safe amount of distance between vehicles, especially on the highway. Then in the event of an emergency stop, there will be more time to do so. (Here's a video on braking in winter weather conditions.)

5. Know the limits of your vehicle

Motorists driving four-wheel or all-wheel drive vehicles may feel safer because of the improved traction and additional ground clearance. But keep in mind that stopping ability isn't improved in such vehicles. So although four- and all-wheel drive vehicles can reduce your chances of getting stuck, they won't help you stop any better in slippery conditions.

6. Tires

When it comes to winter driving, good winter tires are one of the most important investments a motorist can make. The rubber used to make snow tires is specially designed for cold conditions. It's softer, which allows the tires to maintain better contact with the road. And the treads are designed to grip the road better by displacing slush and snow. *Note:* all-season tires are **not** the same as winter or snow tires.

7. Buckle up

A seatbelt will help keep you in your seat if your vehicle does slip on the roadways and it'll help protect you at the moment of impact.

8. Cell phone

Another safety device to take with you is a cell phone. Of course, you shouldn't text or talk while driving. But if you *do* get into trouble, a cell phone can help you get help.

9. Winter safety kit

You should have a winter emergency kit in your vehicle that includes a cell phone, a flashlight and batteries, emergency food, bottled water, candles, blankets, booster cables, sand or kitty litter for traction, tow cables and road maps.

10. Vehicle maintenance

Ensure your windshield wiper fluid is a winter variety that won't freeze and keep it topped off. Make sure your car is running properly. Regular oil changes and servicing are important for both vehicle maintenance and safety. For example, have a mechanic check on the battery's condition. If it's old, replace it. And finally, keep the gas tank full.

Go to Safety Smart for a safety talk for workers on safe winter driving. Not a subscriber to SafetySmart? Sign up for a free trial.

You can also buy a poster on winter driving at SafetyPoster.com.

And because winter weather can endanger your workers in other ways, too, here are some additional winter storm safety tips and advice for dealing with snow on your buildings' roofs.