



# SAFE DRIVING

## PREPARING FOR WINTER DRIVING



This talk provides information on preparing a vehicle for winter driving. The information can apply to employees who commute to and from work in winter weather or to those who drive in these conditions as part of their job. It is not intended for commercial drivers.

### Materials to have on hand:

- A sample emergency kit
- Current, local weather forecast

### Items to consider:

- How should you make sure your vehicle is prepared for wintry conditions?
- What should you keep in your vehicle during the winter in case of emergency?

## TALK

Safe winter driving begins before you even leave your driveway. Winter's snow, ice, and cold temperatures pose a unique set of challenges that can interfere with your vehicle's performance, creating a hazard for you, your passengers, and other drivers on the road.

Therefore, before you get on the road, it is important to make sure your vehicle is in good working condition and is equipped for winter driving. Begin by inspecting or having your mechanic inspect the following items:

- **Tire pressure.** Make sure your tires are inflated to the correct air pressure. This is particularly important in the winter, as cold weather can cause tire pressure to drop. Check your tire pressure frequently.
- **Tire tread and traction.** Check that the tread on your tires is sufficient to provide traction. If it is not, replace your tires. If you live in an area where snowy roads are a frequent concern, consider purchasing snow tires. Tire chains are another option for snowy roads, but make sure you know how to install and use them correctly.
- **Fluids.** Check the levels of your windshield washer fluid, oil, antifreeze (coolant), brake fluid, and power steering fluid.
- **Gas.** In the winter, it is a good idea to keep your gas tank at least half-full at all times to prevent your gas line from freezing.
- **Brakes.** Test them to ensure that they are in good working order. If possible, practice stopping on snow and ice in a safe place to become familiar with how your vehicle performs.
- **Lights and signals.** Check to make sure your headlights, high beams, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, and hazard lights are in good working order. Clean exterior lights if they are dirty.
- **Windshield wipers.** Make sure your windshield wipers, both front and rear (if you have them),

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**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor/** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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are in good working condition. Replace the wiper blades if they are worn.

- **Heater/defroster.** Make sure the heater is functioning properly and that the defroster removes condensation and frost from your windshield.
- **Battery.** Have your mechanic check your battery for sufficient voltage, and inspect the charging system, belts, and cable connections.

Can you think of any other areas to inspect before driving in wintry conditions?

You should also assemble an emergency kit to keep in your vehicle in case you become stranded or experience mechanical difficulty. This is a good idea year-round, but it is particularly important during the winter because of the greater likelihood that you could become stranded in hazardous weather conditions. Your winter emergency kit should include:

- Blankets and warm, dry extra clothes
- Water and nonperishable food
- Essential medications
- Ice scraper, snow brush, and small snow shovel
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Jumper cables
- Container of sand or kitty litter for traction if you get stuck in snow or ice
- Emergency flares or triangles
- Inflated spare tire, tire jack, and tools
- Cell phone and car charger
- Extra windshield washer fluid

Can you think of any other items to include?

