



SAFETY BRIEF: WINTER WEATHER & DRIVING SAFETY

With the cold Chicago weather setting upon us for the next few months, we thought it was a good time for a winter weather safety reminder. Our thanks to Greg who updated this safety topic that was last sent out in 2016. Thanks Greg!

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is still altering how we work, convene, and communicate, these electronic safety briefs are more important than ever since we are not getting together as much.

For any outdoor work, ensure you are in good communication with your project manager and that you have the appropriate PPE to keep warm and protect yourself. Work out warming locations with your project manager that are appropriate for your job site. If using monitoring equipment, ensure you read and understand the limitations and care of the instrument in winter outdoor conditions.

The following are general winter safety tips for you and your family:

Winter storms generally mean a combination of three things, snow, high winds, and extreme cold. These storms can cause many problems, for instance:

- Isolate entire areas
- Make traveling impossible
- Strand travelers
- Collapse power lines and buildings
- Reduce visibility

TERMS TO KNOW

Winter Storm Watch

Severe weather condition may affect your area.

Winter Storm Warning

Severe weather conditions are imminent or occurring.

Heavy Snow Warning

Snowfall of at least 6" in 12 hours, or 8" in 24 hours is expected.

Blizzard Warning

Considerable falling/or blowing of snow and winds of at least 35 mph are expected for several hours.

High Wind Warning

Sustained winds of at least 40 mph or gusts of at least 58 mph or greater are expected to last for at least one hour.

Wind Chill Warning

Wind chills of 25° F below zero or colder.



Frostbite and Hypothermia

Know the signs of hypothermia and frostbite:

Frostbite

- Skin that is very cold and turns numb, hard and pale
- Blisters or swelling
- Joint or muscle stiffness

Hypothermia

- Shivering or shaking
- Lack of coordination
- Drowsiness or confusion
- Slurred speech

Keep the affected body part elevated in order to reduce swelling and move the person to a warm area to prevent further heat loss. Remove all wet clothing and apply a dry, sterile bandage to the affected area or place cotton between any involved fingers or toes. Seek proper medical care as soon as possible.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Keep supplies on hand, batteries, flashlight, portable radio, extra food and water, fuel for heating, a fire extinguisher, medicine, baby supplies, etc.
- Winterize your vehicle. Have extra blankets and clothing, first aid kit, flashlight, shovel, jumper cables, etc.
- In bad weather try not to travel alone, or let people know where you are going, the route you will be taking, and when you expect to arrive.

IF CAUGHT IN A STORM

- **Outside:** Find shelter immediately, try to stay warm and dry and cover any exposed part of your body. If you cannot find shelter, protect yourself against the wind and try to build a fire.
- **In a vehicle:** Stay inside the vehicle, however you will have to exit your vehicle to check and see if your tailpipe is being blocked but keep a hand on the vehicle at all times. Run the car every ten minutes to get some heat but crack the window slightly so you do not get carbon monoxide poisoning. Try to move around in the car to keep your blood moving.

When the storm is over do not overexert yourself, many deaths are caused after the storm is over as a result of a person pushing their body beyond its limits. This will also cause sweating which will freeze in the cold and bring your body temperature down which could result in hypothermia.

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

Winter driving can be hazardous and scary, especially in northern regions that get a lot of snow and ice. Additional preparations can help make a trip safer, or help motorists deal with an emergency. This sheet provides safety information to help prevent motor vehicle injuries due to winter storms.

The Three P's of Safe Winter Driving:

1. PREPARE for the trip:

- **Maintain Your Car:** Check battery, tire tread, and windshield wipers, keep your windows clear, put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir, and check your antifreeze.



- **Have on Hand:** flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter, even floor mats), shovel, snow brush and ice scraper, warning devices (like flares) and blankets. For long trips, add food and water, medication and cell phone.
- **Stopped or Stalled?** Stay with your car, do not overexert, put bright markers on antenna or windows and shine dome light, and, if you run your car, clear exhaust pipe and run it just enough to stay warm.
- **Plan Your Route:** Allow plenty of time (check the weather and leave early if necessary), be familiar with the maps/ directions, and let others know your route and arrival time.
- **Practice Cold Weather Driving!**
 - During daylight, rehearse maneuver slowly on the ice or snow in an empty lot
 - Steer into a skid
 - Know what your brakes will do: stomp on antilock brakes, pump non-antilock brakes
 - Stopping distances are longer on water covered ice and ice
 - Do not idle for a long time with the windows up or in an enclosed space

2. **PROTECT** yourself:

- Buckle up and use child safety seats properly
- Never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag
- Children 12 and under are much safer in the back seat

3. **PREVENT** crashes on the road:

- Drugs and alcohol never mix with driving
- Slow down and increase distances between cars
- Keep your eyes open for pedestrians walking in the road
- Avoid fatigue – Get plenty of rest before the trip, stop at least every three hours, and rotate drivers if possible

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Here are six simple tips to avoid slips, trips and falls during the winter season:

1. Keep walkways, stairways and other work areas clear.
2. Remove hazards, such as water on floors and snow on sidewalks, immediately.
3. When walking, look where you are going and have your hands ready to steady yourself should you slip.
4. Avoid carrying heavy loads that may compromise your balance.
5. Mark hazardous areas. Use temporary signs, cones, barricades or floor stands to warn passing workers.
6. Outside, wear footwear with heavy treads for increased traction. Walk along grassy areas if a walkway is covered in ice. Make yourself visible to drivers by wearing a brightly colored jacket or clothing.



WINTER WEATHER SAFETY QUIZ

1. A “Winter Storm Warning” depicts severe weather conditions are imminent or occurring.
 True
 False
2. A “Wind Chill Warning” depicts wind chills of 25° F below zero or colder.
 True
 False
3. What should you do if caught in a storm while in a vehicle?
 - a. Stay in the vehicle
 - b. Run the engine every 10 minutes to receive heat
 - c. Move around in the vehicle if feasible
 - d. All of the Above
4. Many deaths occur after the storm due to overexertion.
 True
 False
5. You should be in direct contact with your project manager when you are on a job that involves severe winter weather conditions.
 True
 False
6. The three P’s of safe winter driving are prepare, protect and prevent.
 True
 False

SCORE: PASS / FAIL

Employee Signature

Supervisor Signature

Date