

BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

Winter Driving Tips and Snowplow Safety

As the winter season is quickly approaching, driving in the snow and ice is one of the most dangerous activities you can do while out on the road. Traction is at a premium and you can easily lose control of your vehicle. Here are some tips you should remember for driving safely in winter:

- Always use your seatbelt.
- Turn on your headlights during adverse weather conditions. Overcast skies and falling snow limit visibility. It is important to see and be seen.
- Like all the signs say, bridges and overpasses freeze before the roadway. Use extra caution on these.
- Remember that driving in winter weather conditions causes physical and mental fatigue and reduces reaction times. Get plenty of rest and adequate nutrition. Don't drive while you're sleepy or on medication that causes drowsiness.
- Prepare your vehicle well ahead of time. Check fluid levels, tire pressure, lights, and the battery. Have a mechanic give your vehicle a winter check-up and make any necessary repairs.
- Stock an emergency kit containing heavy clothes and a blanket, traction material such as sand or kitty litter, tire chains, a small shovel, first aid kit, flashlight, jumper cables, and a bright cloth to use as a flag.

Safe Snowplow Operations

As you jump in the cab of your truck and put your plow on the road, remember these safety tips to keep you, your truck and your plow safe this plowing season.

Plow Transportation

When transporting a snowplow, angle the blade to the right (toward the curb). This will reduce the chance of catching a curb or a snow bank that could pull your vehicle into it. Never operate a plow while transporting it to and from a job site. It's a good idea to keep the plow control turned off in order to prevent accidental operation.

When transporting a plow, position the blade so as not to block the plow headlights or your vision.

Speed Recommendations

Do not exceed 40 mph when transporting a plow.
Do not exceed 14 mph when plowing.

Avoid Overheating

When transporting a plow or while plowing, check the temperature gauge often. Overheating the engine can be costly. If the vehicle overheats, stop and correct the problem. If overheating occurs while transporting, stop and adjust blade position to allow more airflow to the radiator.

Look Out For Hidden Obstacles

Before it snows, walk around the area you will be plowing to check for obstacles that will become hidden when snow is on the ground. Look for things such as bumper stops and speed bumps, curbs, sidewalk edges, shrubs, water drains, fire hydrants, fences and pipes sticking up from the ground. To prevent damage to the area being plowed as well as to your snowplow and truck, mark any obstructions that will be hard to see when there's snow on the ground.

Buckle Up

Always wear a seat belt when operating a motor vehicle and never plow with your head out the window.

Look Once and Look Again

When moving in reverse, don't rely on the vehicle mirrors. Turn around and look where you're going.

Know Your Surfaces

When plowing in dirt or gravel, lower the plow shoes. This will raise the blade so you don't scrape the surface away. When plowing on asphalt or concrete, raise or remove the plow shoes so that you scrape as close to the surface as possible.

Be Nice To The Hydraulics When you're finished plowing, lower the blade to the ground and turn the plow control off for safety. This will also take stress off the hydraulic components.



Monthly Toolbox Talk

Backing Tips for Safe Snow Removal

Removing snow and ice from parking lots, driveways and other areas can be hard work. Operators need to keep in mind the risk associated with backing up equipment during the service of these areas. Backing up can cause injury and damage, two things that we all want to avoid.

Five Backing Tips

1. Minimize the Need to Back Up
 - Look at a sign map to visually understand the route you are going to have to take.
 - Plan the Route.
 - Know Your Equipment.
2. Properly Equip Your Vehicle With Lights, Alarms and Standard Equipment
3. Use Mirrors Appropriately For Backing Up
 - Clear mirrors of snow and ice.
 - Scan mirrors continuously while backing up slowly.
4. Visually Inspect the Areas You Are Backing Into
 - Look for obstructions like vehicles, light poles, walls, ground conditions and people.
5. Follow Safe Backing Practices

Before Backing:

- Turn on Vehicle hazard lights/safety strobes
- Roll down the window
- Turn off all electronics except for 2-way radios (to avoid distractions)
- Visually locate pedestrians to make sure they are clear of the vehicles path
- Come to a complete stop before shifting into reverse, waiting for the transmission to shift before accelerating

When Backing:

- Always use slow speeds to back, applying the accelerator only when movement is slowed or stopped
- Stop backing immediately if visual contact is lost with pedestrians on foot and resume backing only after visual contact is restored
- Use a co-worker as a spotter if possible and used agreed upon hand signals with the spotter

