



Continuing the conversation from December, also consider the following for January as winter is still with us!

Warm up equipment and tools

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on properly warming up heavy equipment before use. Electrical wires and hoses can become brittle in cold temperatures, so it is important to allow those to heat up properly to avoid damaging your equipment.

Make sure fluids, such as engine and hydraulic oils, in your equipment is rated for the temperatures in your area and replace them if needed. Make sure heaters in cabs are working properly and clear off any ice or snow from windshields and steps. Try and avoid using any equipment that isn't equipped with an enclosed cab to keep your workers warm.

You also need to take extra precautions when working with air compressors and pneumatic tools. Drain fluid from air compressor tanks after each use to prevent the moisture that has accumulated from freezing and damaging the tank. Put antifreeze tool oil in your pneumatic tools and air hoses to protect against the cold.

Clothing

Keeping warm is one of the most important things when working in cold weather. The key is finding a balance of wearing enough

layers to stay warm while still being able to maintain a good range of mobility to perform your work.

Layer clothing with some moisture wicking thermals on your inner layer and have a waterproof outer layer to prevent moisture from soaking into your clothing. If clothing gets wet, it's important to change into dry clothes to avoid losing body heat.

Limit the amount of skin exposed to cold temperatures with careful attention to the extremities by wearing knit hats and earmuffs for the head, wool socks for the feet, balaclavas for the face and gloves and mittens for the hands.

Put emergency kits in work vehicles

Make sure each of your company's fleet of work trucks and vehicles is equipped with winter weather emergency kits. Your kits should include a shovel, ice scraper and brush, sleeping bag, water, non-perishable snacks like protein bars, tow straps, emergency flares and a backup battery for your cell phone. It's also a good idea to have some cat litter, snow or sand to help with traction in case you get stuck. Encourage your workers to create emergency kits to for their personal vehicles.

Be cautious when driving in snow and ice. Give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination and leave plenty of space between yourself and other vehicles to avoid accidents.





Tool Box Talk

Cold Weather Driving Tips

- Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, such as extra food and water, warm clothing, a flashlight, a glass scraper, blankets, medications, and more.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.
- Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times.
- Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow.

Tips for Driving in the Snow

- **Stay home.** Only go out if necessary. Even if you can drive well in bad weather, it's better to avoid taking unnecessary risks by venturing out.
- **Drive slowly.** Always adjust your speed down to account for lower traction when driving on snow or ice.
- **Accelerate and decelerate slowly.** Apply the gas slowly to regain traction and avoid skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry and take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- **Increase your following distance** to five to six seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.
- **Know your brakes.** Whether you have antilock brakes or not, keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
- **Don't stop going up a hill.** There's nothing worse than trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.

Tips for Long-Distance Winter Trips

- **Check the Weather:** Check the weather along your route and when possible, delay your trip if bad weather is expected.
- **Stay Connected:** Before hitting the road, notify others and let them know your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.
- If you get stuck in the snow:
 - **Stay with your vehicle:** Your vehicle provides temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to locate you. Do not try to walk in a severe storm. It is easy to lose sight of your vehicle in blowing snow and become lost.
 - **Don't over exert yourself:** When digging out your vehicle, listen to your body and stop if you become tired.
 - **Be Visible:** Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna of your vehicle or place a cloth at the top of a rolled up window to signal distress. At night, keep the dome light on if possible. It only uses a small amount of electricity and will make it easier for rescuers to find you.
 - **Clear the Exhaust Pipe:** Make sure the exhaust pipe is not clogged with snow, ice or mud. A blocked exhaust pipe can cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment of the vehicle while the engine is running.
 - **Stay Warm:** Use whatever is available to insulate your body from the cold. This could include floor mats, newspapers or paper maps. Pre-pack blankets and heavy clothing to use in case of an emergency.
 - **Conserve Fuel:** If possible, only run the engine and heater long enough to remove the chill. This will help to conserve fuel.

