

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

SELF INSURED WORKER'S COMPENSATION FUND MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2019

Plowed Snow Results in Blind Spots

Obviously, driving in winter weather is a monumental safety hazard due to slippery roads and drivers around you, but there are other hazards as well:

- ◆ Many intersections are blind now because of high snow piles. Be extra cautious when approaching and moving through any intersection.
- ◆ Road shoulders are practically non-existent. As road crews work toward opening these passages, take extra precaution when determining the best location to stage the vehicle. Think through the possible scenarios of "other drivers" that might lose control of their vehicles and what that means to you.
- ◆ Always wear your reflective vest or jacket, especially when working along a roadway. There are a lot more hours of darkness during the winter months. Heavy cloud cover will cause dusk to settle in earlier making you hard to see.
- ◆ Sometimes in the rush of getting our work done, the sense of urgency overwhelms our thought processes about safe driving. Slow down, anticipate other drivers and be aware of the changing conditions. Never assume anything.
- ◆ Exercise caution when getting in and out of vehicles. Walk slowly and deliberately. Wear boots or other slip-resistant footwear
- ◆ Be prepared for black ice formation after melting occurs.



Extreme Weather Driving

There are several general rules for driving safely in extreme weather.

1. Start out earlier and allow extra time when weather conditions are difficult.
2. Turn on your headlights lights so you can see better and so that other drivers can see you better.
3. Slow down and match your speed to the weather conditions rather than the posted speed.
4. Stay alert and watch out for other drivers and dangerous road conditions.
5. Increase following distance from 2 seconds to at least 4 seconds.
6. Prepare for stops so you can bring your vehicle to a halt quickly but safely.
7. Get off the road to a safe place like a rest stop or turnout if weather conditions get so bad that it is unsafe to continue your journey.

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How Cold Is It Out There?

Air temperature is not the only measure of cold. Wind makes it colder. Brisk winds and cold temperatures combine to make it dangerously cold. Exposed human flesh freezes within one minute at $-29^{\circ}\text{C}(-20^{\circ}\text{F})$ when wind speed is 8 km/h (5 mph). When the wind speed increases to 32 km/h (20 mph) human flesh will freeze at $-12^{\circ}\text{C}(+10^{\circ}\text{F})$. These instances are applicable if your clothes and skin are dry. When you are wet, cold injury can result at much higher (less cold) temperatures.

Top 10 Cold Weather Precautions

1. Wear three layers of clothing and always layer to protect the head, hands and feet.
2. Drink plenty of fluids, preferably warm, sweet beverages. Cold weather suppresses thirst, and dehydration can occur without proper fluid intake.
3. Increase caloric intake. Working in heavy protective clothing expends more heat, so 10-15% more calories are required.
4. Take periodic breaks to warm up, with additional breaks as wind velocity increases or the temperature drops.
5. Avoid alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and medications that inhibit the body's response to cold or impair judgment.
6. Avoid the cold if you are becoming exhausted or immobilized, conditions that can accelerate the effects of cold weather.
7. Shield work areas from drafty or windy conditions. Seek a heated shelter if you have prolonged exposure to a wind chill of 20 degrees or less.
8. Attempt to schedule outside work during the warmest hours of the day and minimize activities that decrease circulation.
9. Learn the symptoms of cold-related stresses: heavy shivering, uncomfortable coldness, severe fatigue, drowsiness and euphoria.
10. Work in pairs so partners can monitor one another and obtain help quickly in an emergency.

