

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



"Winterize" Yourself
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Winter is a harsh and unforgiving driving season. Not only do you have snow and ice to deal with, but there are fewer hours of daylight as well. In addition, many of the people with whom you share the road lack the knowledge, skills and temperament to safely navigate the roadways under normal conditions, let alone in snow, ice and fog. It goes without saying that you need to take time before every trip to know and understand weather and traffic conditions. You need to ensure that your equipment is in peak operating conditions paying special attention to tires, lighting, windshield wipers and washer fluids.

Driving in the winter means snow, sleet, and ice that can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers and unforeseen dangers. Once on the road, you need to be prepared, patient and cautious and follow these safe driving rules:

- **Slow down** -- Many accidents occur because drivers are going too fast for road conditions. A slower speed gives you more time to react if something occurs.
- **Give yourself extra space** -- Allow for more room between yourself and other vehicles. You should always have enough space and time to move out of harm's way.
- **Hold your steering wheel firmly** -- Sudden, sharp moves can quickly cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Keep your vehicle steady through ruts in the road, heavy wind and on ice.
- **Brake and accelerate lightly** -- Try not to do anything forcefully in bad weather. When you need to slow down quickly in slippery conditions, try lightly pumping your brakes. This reduces your chance of locking your tires and spinning out of control.

But are you as "winterized" as your truck?

- During the wintertime, icy running boards, steps, and trailer decks account for thousands of slip-and-fall accidents. While most are relatively minor, every year a few drivers are paralyzed for life from these incidents.
- Frostbite is another problem. Many frostbite injuries come from not wearing proper headgear and gloves when you are outside your truck, making deliveries, refueling or conducting your pre/post-trip inspection. The right clothing is the key to staying healthy, injury-free, and behind the wheel.
- A good place to start self-winterizing is with your shoes. Make sure that you wear good quality footwear with oil-resistant soles and some ankle support.
- You may want to invest in a good pair of boot traction grips. They have been proven to reduce slips and falls.
- Many falls are the result of twisting an ankle to the side when getting out of your truck. Good ankle support can minimize this problem. Three points of contact will almost guarantee a safe egress. Treat your work boots with a quality water-sealing product and keep a good coat of polish on them to retain their waterproofing.
- Whenever you are outside in freezing weather, be sure to wear gloves, a hat (most body heat escapes through the head), and in really cold temperatures, make sure your ears are covered.
- Pack a change of clothes and a warm jacket.
- Take along some granola bars, dried fruits and nuts, and other high energy good and water or sports drinks in case you get stranded. Hard candy can keep your mouth moist while providing some degree of energy. Avoid salty foods.

Like the Boy Scouts say, "Be Prepared." It could save you a lot of money, not to mention pain.

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If

you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.