

ACCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES

Winter Weather Driving



The Accident Countermeasures program was created to provide a way for our company and our most important asset, the drivers, to cover important safety topics in a meaningful and accessible manner. This program allows you, the driver, to study safety material and learn desirable information at a time most convenient to you.

Please take the time to read through the material, study the pictures, and then answer the questions at the end of this handout. Your completed answer sheet should then be turned in to receive credit for completing this program.



prepared by:

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Safety Management Services Company's Accident Countermeasures Program

The Safety Management Services Company's Accident Countermeasures Program was created to provide a way for our company and our most important asset, the drivers, to cover important safety topics in a meaningful and accessible manner. This program allows you, the driver, to study safety material and learn desirable information at a time most convenient for you.

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It's That Time of Year Again!

Driving a commercial motor vehicle during the often extreme driving conditions of winter presents many challenges for the professional truck driver. Many serious trucking crashes occur during the winter driving months because drivers have not planned ahead for the possibility of extreme weather conditions. Obtaining proper rest, monitoring road and weather conditions, adjusting the speed of the truck as weather conditions worsen, and ensuring properly maintained equipment are key, essential elements for a commercial driver to remain accident- and injury-free this winter.

Professional drivers make every attempt to stay informed of weather conditions they are heading into by checking weather reports before beginning a trip and periodically throughout the day. National radio and television reports such as the Weather Channel can provide the latest updates regarding winter storm warnings and advisories across the country which allow a driver to adjust his/her trip routes and to plan adequate travel times to safely complete the trip even if weather conditions should cause delays.

Prepare for Winter Driving Conditions

Proper Rest – Ensuring that a driver is properly rested is important any time a commercial vehicle is being operated, but becomes critical when operating in winter driving conditions. Drivers need to constantly stay alert when driving in adverse weather in order to proactively scan the road ahead to anticipate emergencies and to avoid the need to make any sudden maneuvers.



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Tire Care – Drivers must make sure the truck is prepared for winter driving before starting each day. Tires are a vital factor of keeping your vehicle under control when driving on ice or snow. Traction tires on the drive axles of the truck must have ample tread to provide effective control during ice and snow conditions. Drivers must frequently check the air pressure with a tire gauge during the cold weather months as drops in temperature can cause a loss in tire pressure, resulting in a loss of traction and premature tire wear.

Safety Accessories – Drivers are required to wear their seatbelt at all times, but seatbelts become even more critical when driving in winter weather conditions as they clearly have been shown to greatly reduce driver injuries during a crash. Turn on your headlights and you will increase your visibility and make your truck more visible to other motorists.

Turn Off Cruise Control – Cruise control is designed for normal road conditions but should never be used when on a slick road covered with rain, snow, or ice. Cruise control does not allow a driver to remain in control of the vehicle and can cause the drive wheels to spin faster than the rest of the tractor-trailer, leading to a possible slide or jackknife-collision.

Speed and Following Distance – Operating at a speed too fast for the conditions of the roadway is the most frequent cause of winter crashes. Reducing your speed and increasing following distances become critical when on slick roads as a tractor-trailer will take much longer to stop when traction is reduced. Leaving plenty of space between your vehicle and others will also provide additional reaction time to avoid a crash due to another motorist's erratic driving. The first snow of the season is often a very dangerous time to be on the road!

Brake Before Turning – We all know that on snowy conditions it is difficult to steer a truck when applying the brakes, especially when already into a turn. Remember to apply brakes in a controlled manner before entering a turn to prevent skids.

“Black Ice” – Professional drivers are constantly watching for signs of “black ice” forming on the roadway, especially on bridges and overpasses which cool much faster than other areas of the roadway. “Black ice” forms when the temperature drops rapidly and is particularly hazardous at night when it may be much more difficult to notice. Drivers should closely watch when other vehicles are no longer creating spray from their tires or when a thin sheet of ice begins to form on the tractor mirrors as this may indicate the formation of “black ice.”

Preventing Winter-Related Injuries

Many professional drivers are unnecessarily injured each winter, negatively impacting their families and companies for whom they work. Most injuries can be prevented by keeping in mind a few simple safety steps:

- Always use proper footwear which includes a rugged, non-slip sole that provides support for each ankle.



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- Always be aware of where you are about to walk, as ice and snow can often be found in/around parking areas where drivers may be required to walk.
- Before entering or exiting the tractor, watch for ice accumulating on handrails or steps. Never attach carpet onto tractor steps during the winter as it will accumulate water and freeze into a sheet of ice.
- Always use three points of contact when exiting/entering the tractor, the trailer, or climbing onto the catwalk.
- Slip-on traction devices can often prevent slips/falls when a driver must walk outside the truck on snow or ice (remove prior to entering the truck or walking on a dry surface).

Let's make it our daily goal to end the work day in the same condition as we started, remaining accident- and injury-free!



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Accident Information

- Date:** February 23, 2010
- Location:** Midwestern state highway.
- Accident Description:** The driver was traveling at approximately 25 miles per hour in poor weather conditions with blowing snow. The roadway had been plowed but the high wind was causing icing of the roadway. The driver was only 40 miles from his destination and felt he could continue to make his delivery even though he had passed numerous tractor-trailers and cars off the roadway due to the driving conditions. That did not occur as the truck jackknifed and could not be towed out for 48 hours due to the weather conditions.
- Loss Information:** Tractor and cargo damaged as a result of the jackknife and nearly rolling over.
- Accident Cause:** Driver continuing to operate on an ice and snow covered highway with crosswinds in excess of 40 mph.
- Result of Claim:** Physical damage to tractor, cargo damages, towing, and associated claims costs totaled nearly \$76,000. Both the shipper and consignee were very unhappy with the carrier. Driver was terminated due to his involvement in a preventable accident. Driver now has a "DOT Recordable Accident" listed on his Pre-Employment Screening Report" (PSP), which will negatively impact his future career.





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Name: _____ Employee Number: _____ Date: _____

Question Page

Please return this page to your safety department to receive credit for course completion.

1. Why is it so important for a driver to be properly rested when driving in winter weather?

2. Why does it become critical to monitor tire pressure during cold winter months?

3. What is black ice?

4. To prevent slip-and-fall injuries, what type of footwear should a commercial driver wear when walking on ice/snow?

5. When entering or exiting the tractor during winter weather months, what is the proper technique that all trucking professionals must utilize numerous times every day?



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Name: _____ Employee Number: _____ Date: _____

Answer Page – DO NOT INCLUDE THIS PAGE WITH THE COUNTERMEASURES HANDOUT TO THE DRIVER!

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1. Why is it so important for a driver to be properly rested when driving in winter weather?
Drivers must constantly stay alert when driving in adverse driving conditions to anticipate emergencies and to proactively avoid the need to make any sudden maneuvers.
2. Why does it become critical to monitor tire pressure during cold winter months?
Good traction is critical towards maintaining control of the vehicle when on snow and ice. Cold temperatures can cause a loss in air pressure, resulting in a loss of traction.
3. What is black ice?
Black ice develops when the temperature drops rapidly and a thin coating of ice forms on the roadway, which often cannot be recognized by a driver unless he/she is paying close attention.
4. To prevent slip-and-fall injuries, what type of footwear should a commercial driver wear when walking on ice/snow?
Proper footwear for a professional when working outside the truck during the winter should include a boot with a non-slip sole, preferably one that provides good ankle support.
5. When entering or exiting the tractor during winter weather months, what is the proper technique that all trucking professionals must utilize numerous times every day?
Utilize three points of contact with the tractor when entering the tractor or trailer, keeping two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with the equipment at all times while climbing.