



Winter Driving Safety

TOOLBOX TALK: Winter Driving Safety

RATTLIR Safety Series – “Strike Before It Bites”

Purpose

Winter driving presents hazards including icy roads, reduced visibility, snow accumulation, and longer stopping distances. This toolbox talk outlines winter driving preparation, safe driving practices, and emergency response to minimize risks and keep workers safe during winter conditions.





Winter Driving Safety

Vehicle Preparation

- Check tire tread (minimum 4/32" recommended for winter).
- Maintain proper tire pressure – cold weather reduces PSI.
- Ensure wipers, defrosters, and headlights work properly.
- Use winter-grade windshield washer fluid.
- Keep fuel levels above half a tank.
- Carry an emergency kit: shovel, traction mats, blanket, scraper, flashlight.

Driving Best Practices

- Slow down and increase following distances.
- Accelerate and brake gradually.
- Avoid cruise control on slippery roads.
- Use headlights in snow or fog.
- Approach bridges and overpasses with caution – they freeze first.
- Plan for longer stopping distances:

Road Condition	Recommended Following Distance
Wet roads	5–6 seconds
Snow-covered roads	6–8 seconds
Icy roads / black ice risk	8–10 seconds (minimum)
Severe winter storm	10–12+ seconds or avoid driving if possible

Black Ice Awareness

- Black ice is nearly invisible and common in shaded areas and early mornings.
- A glossy sheen on pavement indicates possible ice.
 - If you cannot see the tire tracks of the car ahead of you, you are likely driving on black ice.
- If you hit black ice: ease off the gas, steer gently, and avoid braking hard.

Emergency Response

- If stranded, stay inside the vehicle and call for assistance.
- Run engine sparingly – ensure exhaust pipe is clear of snow.
- Use hazard lights and reflective markers.
- Avoid overexertion when clearing snow.
- Notify supervision of travel delays or hazardous road conditions.



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Discussion Questions

- Are road conditions safe for today's travel?
- Is the vehicle fully prepared for winter weather?
- Do forecasts indicate snow, ice, or reduced visibility?

RATTLIR Takeaway

Winter driving requires patience, preparation, and constant awareness. By adjusting driving habits and recognizing winter hazards, we ensure we strike before it bites – even in severe conditions.