

# Be prepared for winter weather hazards.

The first ice and snow of winter challenges drivers who might forget how to adjust their driving to meet these hazardous conditions. As a professional driver, you need to adjust your driving to keep your rig under control and also protect yourself from others who fail to do so.

## Prepare to be stranded.

Make sure you have adequate supplies with you to keep you comfortable if you are stranded for several days. Key supplies include:

- Winter jacket, blankets, hat, gloves and boots
- Flashlight and batteries
- Matches/lighter
- Charged cell phone battery
- First aid supplies and extra medications
- Emergency food and water
- Reflective vest and/or hat for chaining up

## Winterize your truck.

Before cold weather arrives, inspect your vehicle thoroughly and ensure it is winterized according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Adequate tread on tires is critical, as well as heavy-duty windshield wipers and plenty of windshield washer fluid. Make sure fuel heaters and block heaters are working, and keep a heavy-duty extension cord on hand. Test air dryers or have additive to remove moisture. Skimping on maintenance or part replacement during winter can leave you stranded in dangerous conditions.



Breaking down or being stranded on the side of the road is extremely dangerous, particularly in inclement weather.

## Follow state chain laws.

State chain laws can vary greatly, so know the laws where you travel with [thetruckersreport.com/chain-law-information](http://thetruckersreport.com/chain-law-information). Make sure you have enough chains for your truck and trailer if pulling one. Check chains to make sure they are in good repair. When installing, park in a safe place and wear bright reflective clothing so you are highly visible. Always stop a few yards after installing chains to retighten and reposition. Follow manufacturer recommendations, as well as posted signs, for maximum speed allowed with chains.

## Clear your vehicle of snow.

During heavy snowfall, accidents and vehicle damage can occur when large chunks of snow or ice dislodge from the tops of vehicles. In several states, drivers may be cited by law enforcement for ice or snow falling from their vehicle. These incidents are difficult to prevent because most drivers have no safe means of dislodging snow and ice from the top of their truck or trailer.

Companies should establish snow removal stations in their yards to assist drivers in safe removal of snow. Shippers should also be asked to provide similar resources, when appropriate. Flatbed operators should carry equipment, such as brooms or brushes, to assist them in removing snow from decks or loads that they can safely reach.

## Plan ahead.

- Incorporate extra time into your schedule in anticipation of delays
- Plan your route along major roadways that are likely to have better ice and snow maintenance
- Monitor weather conditions along your route
- Notify dispatch and customers in advance of possible weather-related delays
- Keep fuel tanks full
- Have a Plan B in case routes are closed or you run out of driving hours; discuss this plan with dispatch



Find a safe place to park if conditions deteriorate.

## Tips for driving in snow and icy conditions.

- Limit any distracting activities to give your full attention to driving
- Turn on your lights to see better and be seen
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance to compensate for reduced visibility and increased stopping distances; do not use exhaust brakes in slippery conditions

- Look for ice especially in shaded spots, bridges, overpasses and intersections where it is likely to form first
- Beware of drivers going too fast for conditions, and be prepared to respond to their loss of control or failure to stop or yield at intersections
- Give snowplows plenty of space and do not pass them unless it is safe; do not pass them on two-lane roadways
- Notify dispatch and customers that you may be delayed
- Pull over and park at a safe location if driving conditions become too dangerous

## Bridge decks.

Bridge decks often freeze over before other road surfaces when temperatures drop.

This occurs because the deck is cooled from underneath the bridge as well as from the top.

When temperatures are near freezing, drivers

need to be cautious when moving from a wet roadway to a bridge surface as the deck may have iced up. Reduce your speed and increase your following distance before reaching the bridge.



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