Winter Driving tips for Drivers and the Vehicle

Proper Steps to take in Preparing for Winter Driving Conditions:

Step 1: Make sure that your truck is prepared for winter driving.

Tires are the most important aspect of keeping your vehicle under control in snow and ice condition. Traction tires on the drive axle(s) of the truck with ample tread depth provides the best control in snow and ice conditions. The tread depth and condition of the steer axle tires is also vital in keeping the control of the steering. If you are operating in areas with chain laws make sure the chains are in good condition and ready to be installed if needed. Mirrors and all glass in the truck should be clean for maximum visibility.

Step 2: Lights On

Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.

Step 3: No Cruise Control

Don't use cruise control on snowy or icy roads.

Step 4: Bridges, Overpasses, Infrequently Traveled Roads

Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.

Step 5: Don't "pump" the Brakes

If your truck is equipped with ABS brakes do not "pump" the brakes.

Step 6: Drive Slowly

Driving too quickly is the main cause of winter accidents. Just because you are a large truck with a heavy load doesn't mean that you're invincible, be sure to drive slowly and carefully on snow and ice covered roads.

Step 7: Pay Attention

Maneuvers are more difficult to make in the snow. Be sure to anticipate what your next move is going to be to give yourself lots of room for turns and stopping.

Step 9: Don't Tailgate

While tailgating is a bad idea under normal driving conditions, it is much, much worse in winter weather. Stopping takes much longer on snowy and icy roads than on dry pavement. Be sure to leave a lot of room between your vehicle and the one in front of you. A good rule of thumb is

to leave four vehicle lengths between you and the vehicle in front of you for every 10 mph you are driving.

Step 10: Brake Before Making Turns
It is difficult to steer vehicles while applying the brakes in snowy conditions. So make sure to smoothly step on your truck's brakes to reduce speed before entering turns. Once you have rounded the corner you can accelerate again.

Step 11: Drive Smoothly
Snowy and icy roads are much less forgiving than dry pavement. Make sure not to make any abrupt turns or stops when driving. Doing so will often cause your vehicle to lose control and skid out.

Step 12: Be Familiar with Your Vehicle
It is always a good idea to be familiar with your vehicle's driving dynamics. This is especially true when driving on snow or ice. Also, be aware of the weight condition of your truck. As your load and weight diminish the handling of the truck in snow and ice will change.

Step 13: Learn How to Control Skids
While it is best practiced in a driving school or on a closed course, it is not a bad idea to practice controlling skids in your vehicle so that you know how to react if it ever happens under real world driving conditions. When skidding, you actually need to go against your natural instincts and turn into the skid and accelerate. Taking your foot off of the brakes and accelerating gently during skids transfers your vehicle's weight from the front to the rear and often helps vehicles to regain control.

The FHWA's web site is http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm contains links to information on weather and road conditions and the availability of travel web sites and 511

Winter Tips to follow (concerning the vehicle):

1) Blended fuel purchased or a diesel supplement is added to the fuel tanks as temperatures creep below 32°.

2) Make sure the unit block heaters are plugged in when unit is not in use during the winter months.

3) Initial start up each day should follow this order – unplug block heater before start up, ignition in *On* position, if equipped with *Wait for glow plugs* light, wait for light to go out, start unit, once running, unit should be brought up to temperature before operating.

4) If equipped with air brakes and air tank pull cords and/or drain orifices, you should purge tanks daily, make sure the air system airs to 120psi, and

listen for the air drier to purge the system clean of moisture.
5) Make sure all fluids are up, including window wash. Now is the time to check additional fluids, such as "Wet Kits" etc.
6) Make sure wiper blades are functional, all glass/mirrors cleaned, if equipped, heated mirrors functional, make sure headlights tail/turn lights are cleaned off of snow/ice/salt and operational

7) If you have driven in snow, ice, slosh, before stopping the vehicle at the end of their shift, lightly have the brakes applied to clean off and dry the shoes, drums, rotors and pads to prevent brakes pads freezing to drum/rotors while the unit is parked.

8) Make sure any steps and grab handles are clean, secure and dry to avoid slipping.

9) If you are operating in state that require chains to be on board, make sure the chains are the correct size, properly secured, clean, and not broken as to be easily applied when necessary.

Not sure what your states chain laws are?

Go to: http://www.tirechainsrequired.com/laws.html

3 Point Rule!
(No, I am not talking basketball)

Now is a good time to remind drivers to follow the 3 Point rule while getting in and out of their trucks. During the winter months footing conditions are compromised and the chance of slipping or falling is increased. The 3 Point rule is simply that you keep three out of four of your contact points (hands and feet) secured to keep from slipping or falling. When exiting a truck, for example, one hand on the cab handle, one hand gripping interior door handle and one foot on a step while the other foot is in transition, by doing this you always maintain three points of contact.