

FROM THE ISAO SAFETY COMMITTEE: WINTER DRIVING

Most of us have likely experienced winter driving in Ontario-gripping the wheel through a white-out, avoiding another vehicle in a skid, or that sinking feeling when you hit a patch of black ice.

In Canada about 1/3 of all collisions occur during winter months and insurance collision claims increase by almost 50% in December and January.

DESCRIBE the hazards

- Ice and snow severely impact road conditions. It takes 3 to 12 times more distance to stop on ice and snow compared to dry conditions. Heavier vehicles in general require greater stopping distances.
- Fluctuating temperatures are of concern in cold weather. As ice warms, roads become more slippery. A temperature variation from -18°C to 0°C can double the braking distance of a vehicle.
- Snow and ice buildup (including road splatter) on your vehicle before, during and after driving can decrease operator visibility.
- Winter conditions can increase the presence of snowplows and emergency vehicles on the road.

DISCUSS control measures

Consider the following in addition to the general tips previously discussed.

- Perform a pre-winter vehicle checkup (rotate tires, check the battery, etc.).
- Install winter tires on your vehicles. The specialized rubber and tread on these tires provide better traction.

Using snow tires may also save you on insurance rates.

- Before you head out, check the weather and give yourself extra time to get where you're going.
- Keep your gas and windshield washer fluid topped up. For washer fluid, a winter-ready formula is recommended to prevent fluid from freezing and ensure you can see clearly.
- Ensure you remove snow and ice from your vehicle before getting on the road. This includes clearing your windshield, all lights, mirrors, windows, as well as your hood and roof. Any snow left uncleared has the potential to obstruct your view by sliding onto the windshield or flying off onto someone else's vehicle!
- Because it takes longer to brake on ice and snow, give yourself extra braking distance to effectively stop.
- In case of a skid, stay calm. In general, ease off the pedal (either the brake or gas), look to where you want to go, and make small and controlled steering adjustments.
- Be mindful of snowplows and emergency vehicles. Snowplows have large blind spots and may not be able to see you.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car including items such as a shovel, blanket, first aid, flashlight, etc.

DEMONSTRATE knowledge

- Review with your organization's policy on safe winter driving with crew members.
- Talk about near-misses related to winter driving that crew members may have experienced.
- Consider taking a driver safety course.

Date:
Location:
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Presenter:
MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY (Each participant is to sign below)
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