

# Getting ready for winter

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Driving is one of the most hazardous things we do – whether it's driving to and from work, at work or for work.

For forest workers the hazard is even greater. We have increased exposure due to the amount of time many of us spend driving both on and off highway. On resource roads the conditions and surface materials are inconsistent; road design is not to highway standards; and, the everyday challenges of safely operating a vehicle is amplified by an increasing number of recreational road users who are often not aware of the potential danger and dynamics of large gravel, log truck and other machinery. In some areas, there are operational, procedural and radio frequency changes that are added to the mix right now and it can make for white knuckle driving experiences for many woodlot owners/operators and other forestry workers.

Because there are so many things we cannot control on the roads – like conditions, weather and other drivers – we have to be extra vigilant and adapt our own behavior to best ensure we are responsive to every condition.

There is a safe speed for every vehicle, in every condition, for every curve, for every load, and it is often a lot slower than we might anticipate. The comfort of vehicles – whether logging trucks or light resource trucks, family vans, or ATVs might give one a false

sense of security and safety, especially in winter; don't allow comfort to mislead you. Slowing down is the most important thing you can do to avoid an incident.

Getting your vehicle (and yourself) ready for winter may prevent incidents and prepare you if you are involved in an incident. Winter preparations should include seasonal maintenance, changing your tires over, re-stocking your emergency kit, and reviewing appropriate winter driving behaviours with yourself and others. Here are some helpful reminders of good behaviours to follow for the best safety and business outcomes:

- 1) Plan ahead – Decide on your route before you go and choose the safest route possible. Check out websites like [www.drivebc.ca](http://www.drivebc.ca) for up-to-date information on road conditions.
- 2) Be prepared – Always carry an emergency kit stocked with the essentials you may need should you get stranded, to keep warm, fed, safe and hydrated.
- 3) Give it time – Leave extra time between appointments to ensure you get to where you need to be on time and without the need to rush.
- 4) Maintain a safe following distance – Slippery roads mean extra distance is needed to stop.
- 5) Watch your speed – Keep your speed right for the conditions; often this means well below the posted speed limit.
- 6) Keep it steady – Avoid sudden braking and acceleration by keeping transitions smooth.
- 7) Avoid distractions – Distractions are hazardous even during the best weather. Focus your full attention to the road ahead, and driving.
- 8) Don't go – If the weather is poor,

it is better to postpone your trip and wait for the weather to improve.

- 9) Visit <http://shiftintowinter.ca/> for posters, tips and other materials to support safe driving in winter throughout BC.
- 10) And remember: leave the phone alone!

### EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLISTS:

#### Everyday winter driving:

Ice scraper and snow brush  
Snow shovel  
Reflective safety triangles / flares  
Flashlight and batteries  
Booster cables / battery booster  
Traction aid (sand, kitty litter, etc.)  
Extra windshield washer fluid  
Winter toque and gloves  
First aid kit  
Tire sealant  
Tow rope or chain  
Vehicle fire extinguisher  
Whistle  
Bright orange or red flag or cloth

#### Highway driving:

All of the above, plus:  
Emergency blanket  
Winter boots and clothing  
Tire chains  
Emergency food (nonperishable).  
Bottles of water  
Candles, tin can and matches  
12-volt tire air compressor  
Small tool kit and duct tape  
Extra prescription medication

#### Remote road driving:

All of the above, plus:  
Commercial Two Way Radio, programmed with appropriate road channels  
Knife, hatchet and/or handsaw  
GPS unit and updated maps  
Water purification tablets

*This is one of a series of Spotlight on safety columns produced for the Woodland Almanac by the BC Forest Safety Council. If you have a suggestion or would like to see a particular safety topic covered, please let us know. BSFSC has a team of safety advisors with more than 100 years of combined forestry and safety experience to provide trusted guidance and advice in all safety matters. Email [safetyadvisors@bcforestsafe.org](mailto:safetyadvisors@bcforestsafe.org) or call toll-free: 1-877-741-1060. The BCFSC is here to support industry achieve excellence in health and safety for all forest operations and their workers. ♦*

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