



SAFETY ALERT

OF THE MONTH

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION

Shift Into Winter – Winter Driving Safety

AOM# 2020-10-20

The winter driving season is fast approaching! The Shift Into Winter safety campaign is an annual event that reminds all drivers what they can do to prepare to be safe on snowy and icy roads. Review the following information and share it with your co-workers.

Prepare Yourself

1. **Check the current road conditions and weather forecast.** Use the [DriveBC.ca](https://drivebc.ca) website to check conditions. Do a risk assessment and ask yourself – is it safe to go?
2. **Plan your route.** Avoid any roads that may become dangerous during bad weather. Use a check-in system and provide details on your route and planned arrival time.
3. **Leave lots of time so you're not rushing.** Try to travel during daylight and delay your trip if the weather is bad. Consider delaying your trip to allow road maintenance activities to get underway-- plowed and sanded roads can significantly improve safety.
4. **Learn winter road skills.** Sign up for driving training to learn how to brake safely, how to get out of a skid, and how your vehicle handles in winter weather.
5. **Have an emergency plan.** If you get stuck or stranded, don't panic. Stay with your vehicle for safety and warmth. Bring a winter survival kit that includes warm clothing (winter boots, coat, gloves and hat).

Prepare Your Vehicle

1. **Install winter tires.** Use four matched winter tires that carry the mountain/snowflake winter tire symbol and with tread no less than 3.5 mm – even for 4 X 4 vehicles. Tires marked with an M+S (Mud and Snow) are also acceptable but do not provide the same degree of performance. Consider studded tires if you are regularly driving on icy roads.
2. **Get your car winter ready with a maintenance check up.** Preventative maintenance is key. Change your wipers to winter blades, they are heavier to handle snow and ice.
3. **Clear snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors, hood and the roof.** After starting your vehicle, wait for the window to defrost completely to allow clear visibility.



BC Forest Safety

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4. **If you have a cell phone, make sure it is charged and bring it with you.** A car charger is a smart device to have on hand. Phone batteries can freeze in cold weather.
5. **Make sure your windshield washer reservoir is full.** Carry extra fluid in your vehicle.
6. **If you get stuck in a storm, don't panic.** Avoid overexertion and exposure. Stay in your vehicle and open your window slightly to make sure you have a supply of fresh air. Use a survival candle for heat. Set out a warning light or flares.

Drive for the Conditions

1. **Maintain a safe following distance.** Look ahead and keep plenty of distance between you and other vehicles (at least 4 seconds). This will allow plenty of room in situations where you may need to brake suddenly. Leave more space when visibility is poor.
2. **Drop your speed to match road conditions.** The posted speed is the maximum speed under ideal conditions. In winter, it is safer to drive below the posted speed.
3. **Watch for black ice.** Slow down when approaching shaded areas, bridges and overpasses as these sections of road freeze sooner than others. Watch for "black ice", areas of the road with a thin, almost invisible coating of ice.
4. **Avoid sudden moves.** Start slowly and accelerate gradually to avoid spinning your wheels. When stopping, plan well in advance, apply the brakes gently and slowly add pressure. Steer smoothly and avoid quick movements that you put you in a spin.
5. **Know how to handle a skid.** If you start to skid, ease off the brake or accelerator, and look and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go. Be careful not to over-steer.
6. **See and be seen.** It is critical for drivers to see and be seen in low light conditions, and when blowing snow impairs visibility. Always drive with your headlights on.

Additional Resources

- Shift into Winter – Winter driving resources including tools and safety campaign resources - <https://shiftintowinter.ca/>
- Webinar – Practical BC Winter Driving Tips - <https://roadsafetyatwork.ca/events/webinar-shift-into-winter-practical-bc-winter-driving-tips/>

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Disclaimer: We encourage the sharing of information that can help improve safety for all workers.



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