



## *Winter Driving*

Winter affects various parts of the country differently. No matter where your company is located, drivers should prepare for the diverse problems winter may bring. Whether it is rain, freezing rain, wind, or snow, drivers must be prepared for changing weather conditions.

Winter can cause many problems. From black ice to whiteouts, these conditions can cause senseless losses to happen. Proper pre-trip planning, preparation, and driving can result in successful completion of a trip. Here are some tips drivers can use to help reduce the risk of a crash in autumn and winter:

1. Plan trips accordingly. Check weather forecasts and possible road construction areas along your route. Chart fuel and meal stop locations, allow extra time for traffic delays in major metropolitan areas, and try to balance distribution of cargo weight. If poor weather conditions reduce visibility, pull over in a safe place until visibility improves.
2. Make sure your equipment is winterized. Check antifreeze, inspect tire tread depth, and test the heater and defroster. Install tire chains (if required), carry extra warm clothing and boots, and pack non-perishable foods.
3. Use proper driving procedures when on the road. In adverse weather, drivers should decrease their speed to increase following distance. Drivers need to be aware of becoming overconfident if they have antilock brakes. If the brakes happen to lock, release them to avoid sliding; this will help to regain steering.

### ***The most frequent reasons for winter weather related accidents are:***

- Limited or reduced visibility
- Limited or reduced traction
- Unable to judge safe speed for road conditions
- Aggressive braking on a slick road
- Poor shifting skills on a slick road
- Poor negotiation of a curve
- Failure to prepare vehicle properly
- Failure to plan route properly
- Failure to adapt to changing weather patterns