

# Safety FOCUSED

November 2014

## Winter Driving Safety Tips

These tips for winter driving can help prevent serious injury or death.

## Wet Weather and Work Surfaces

Use this guidance to take heed of wet floors and help you avoid falls at work.

A monthly safety newsletter from  
**Crendon Insurance Brokers Limited**

## Winter Driving Safety Tips

Many people commute to their jobs via cars every working day. Driving so often can make employees develop a nonchalant attitude when it comes to driving safely. But driving to work every day does not absolve risk—in fact, it compounds it.

Especially during the winter, when snow and ice reduce visibility and make roads slick, drivers should pay special attention on the road. It is important to adjust your driving practices based on the season so that you can reduce the safety hazards that winter driving can cause.

### Tips for Safe Driving in Winter Conditions

- Drive at a reduced speed on slippery roads and increase the following distance between you the vehicle ahead—this gives you an additional cushion of space for safe stopping.
- Practise driving in slippery conditions so you are well-prepared and comfortable when winter comes.
- Anticipate stops by slowing down gradually and well ahead of junctions in order to allow for enough time to stop safely.
- Look out for areas that might induce skidding, such as unexpected ice patches or piles of wet leaves. Keep in mind that wet ice, warmed by the sun, is twice as dangerous as completely frozen ice. Be especially alert whenever there is any kind of precipitation during cold weather.

- Plan ahead for lane changes—check your rear-view mirror and blind spots, and use your signal. Make the move with the smallest possible steering change and with a light foot on the accelerator.
- When you drive into snow, stepping on the accelerator may cause the wheels to spin with little forward movement. In such cases, avoid over-accelerating.

### Prepare Your Vehicle for Winter Driving

These tips can help prepare you for treacherous winter driving conditions:

- Do a full maintenance check on your vehicle in autumn, including the battery, ignition, lights, brakes, tyres, the exhaust and the heating/cooling system.
- Consider putting winter tyres on your vehicle as they will provide traction in snowy and icy conditions.
- Keep a fully stocked first-aid kit handy—supplies such as a blanket, torch, extra clothing, emergency food and water, matches, etc.
- Check to make sure you have enough screenwash and that the concentration is suitable for cold conditions.
- Inspect wiper blades for any damage and replace if necessary.

**You may need up to ten times the normal distance for braking when driving in the winter, according to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.**



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## Wet Weather and Work Surfaces

Slipping on a wet surface can result in bruises, strains and sprains, lacerations, fractures, head trauma—and sometimes even death. And those incidents can lead to lost working time and a painful recovery period. Fortunately, there are several steps you can take to keep yourself safe.

### Ways of Lowering Risk

The following suggestions are helpful for you and your co-workers to prevent and reduce everyone's risk of slips and trips at work:

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Use caution signs to identify when a surface is wet or likely to become wet, and remove the signs as soon as the surface is dry.
- Barricade affected areas when possible.
- Near wet areas, check for equipment and electrical currents that may not be grounded and un-insulated wires. Never use electrical equipment while standing on a wet surface.
- Place floor mats and broly stands at all entrances to reduce tracking in water from outside.
- Be sure to wear shoes with slip-resistant soles.
- Report any spills or wet areas that you notice to your supervisor.

### Avoiding a Slip

These tips will help you avoid slips:

- Slow down—rushing is not worth a serious injury.
- Take small steps to keep your balance centred.
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward to form a stable base.
- Make wide turns at corners.
- Use handrails if present.
- Concentrate on the surface you are walking on.
- Be prepared for slippery patches.
- Keep your hands out for balance.



## Safety in NUMBERS 123



Slips and trips caused UK workers to lose an estimated **1,332,000** working days from 2012 to 2013.

According to the Health and Safety Executive.

## Real-life Case Study

Winter driving in the United Kingdom can result in a serious injury if you choose to ignore necessary precautions.

In 2014, two weeks after a construction worker from Aberdeen purchased a new vehicle, he crashed it by failing to adhere to winter driving precautions. As he sped down the motorway at nearly 130 kilometres per hour, he hit black ice and went off the road. Three months after the incident, he could not walk and was not expected to for another month—or more. With multiple broken bones in his leg and arm, he was lucky enough to escape the accident with his life.

While driving during winter, it is important to remain alert for hazardous conditions like black ice. Though it is virtually invisible to the naked eye, certain characteristics can hint that black ice is present. For example, if the road looks shiny and freshly paved, there is most likely black ice covering it. If you notice a gleam on the road, it could be a warning to slow down.

Whether you think you may be driving on black ice or not, it is always recommended to reduce driving speeds during winter. Snow and ice can make driving more difficult and dangerous if you are unprepared and negligent to the reality of harsh weather conditions.