

# Winter Weather Driving – Landscaping Meeting Kit



## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Whether transporting equipment, traveling between job sites, or responding to emergency calls, winter driving requires extra caution and preparation. Accidents on icy or snow-covered roads can lead to serious injuries.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

The dangers associated with winter driving in landscaping are significant and varied.

### Specific Risks:

#### 1. Slippery Roads:

- **Ice and Black Ice:** Ice and black ice (a thin, transparent layer of ice that is difficult to see) can make roads extremely slippery, leading to loss of control, skidding, and accidents.
- **Snow-Covered Roads:** Snow can reduce traction and make it difficult to stop or steer.

#### 1. Reduced Visibility:

- **Blizzards and Snowstorms:** Heavy snowfall and blizzards can drastically reduce visibility.
- **Fog and Frost:** Cold temperatures cause fog and frost to form on windshields impairing visibility.

#### 1. Cold Weather Hazards:

- **Mechanical Failures:** Cold weather can cause mechanical issues, such as battery failure, frozen fuel lines, or tire pressure drops, which can lead to breakdowns or accidents.
- **Driver Fatigue:** Long hours on the road in challenging conditions can lead to driver fatigue.

#### 1. Hazardous Road Conditions:

- **Snowdrifts:** Accumulated snow on the sides of roads can form snowdrifts, which can block lanes, hide obstacles, or cause vehicles to become stuck.
- **Potholes and Debris:** Snow and ice can conceal potholes, debris, or other road hazards.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

How to protect yourself and others when driving in winter conditions:

## Before You Drive

### 1. Vehicle Preparation

- **Winterize Your Vehicle:** Ensure your vehicle is prepared for winter by checking the battery, antifreeze levels, brakes, and tire pressure. Use winter tires that provide better traction.
- **Windshield and Lights:** Make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition and that you have plenty of windshield washer fluid rated for cold temperatures. Clean your headlights and, taillights.

### 1. Plan Your Route

- **Check the Weather:** Before setting out, check the weather forecast and road conditions.
- **Know Your Route:** Plan your route in advance, taking into account the safest roads. Avoid routes with steep inclines or sharp turns that may be more dangerous in icy conditions.

### 1. Emergency Preparedness

- **Emergency Kit:** Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle that has blankets, a flashlight, a first-aid kit, a shovel, ice scraper, extra windshield washer fluid, and non-perishable snacks.
- **Cell Phone and Charger:** Ensure your cell phone is fully charged before leaving.

## While You Drive

### 1. Adjust Your Speed:

- **Slow Down:** Reduce your speed to match road conditions.
- **Increase Following Distance:** Increase the distance between your vehicle and the car in front.

### 1. Driving Techniques

- **Steer and Brake Gently:** Avoid sudden movements when steering or braking, as these can cause your vehicle to skid. Apply brakes gently and steer smoothly to maintain control.
- **Use Low Beams in Fog:** If you encounter fog, use your low-beam headlights.
- **Avoid Cruise Control:** Do not use cruise control in snowy or icy conditions.

### 1. Stay Focused and Alert

- **Stay Alert:** Pay close attention to the road, other drivers, and changing weather conditions.
- **Watch for Black Ice:** Be especially cautious on bridges, overpasses, and shaded areas where black ice is more likely to form.

## If You Get Stuck or Encounter an Emergency

### 1. Remain Calm and Stay with Your Vehicle

- **Stay with Your Vehicle:** If you get stuck in snow, it's usually safer to stay with your vehicle.
- **Signal for Help:** Use your hazard lights or place a brightly colored cloth on your antenna or door handle to signal for help.

### 1. Freeing Your Vehicle

- **Clear Snow from Around Tires:** Use a shovel to clear snow from around your tires.

- **Use Sand or Kitty Litter:** Spread sand or kitty litter in front of your tires to help gain traction on ice.

## **Training and Awareness**

### **1. Winter Driving Training and Refresher Courses**

- **Driver Training:** Employers should provide training for workers who drive in winter conditions and conduct refresher courses at the start of each winter season.

### **1. Promote a Safety Culture**

- **Encourage Safe Practices:** Encourage all workers to prioritize safety over speed.
- **Lead by Example:** Supervisors and experienced drivers should model safe winter driving practices.

## **FINAL WORD**

By taking the time to winterize your vehicle, adjusting your driving habits, and staying prepared for emergencies, you can protect yourself and others on the road.