

Job Name: _____ Job Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Topic 208: Driving in Severe Weather Conditions

Introduction: Navigating a vehicle in extreme weather situations may at times put persons in peril if they are not prepared to deal with the storm. Operating a vehicle in a careless manner during any kind of adverse weather puts the driver, any passengers, and all other motorists in danger. Inclement weather presents itself in many forms and it is important to recognize and understand what kinds of conditions a particular storm type will generate.



- *If one is not careful*, a blizzard blowing huge amounts of ice and snow can expose you to serious hazards with only a moments notice.
- *If a storm such as a tornado* or a hurricane is pushing heavy winds, the risk from large flying objects and debris is present. Blowing dust can also reduce visibility to almost zero and causes many problems to motorists on busy roadways.
- *Hard rain* is not particularly dangerous, until you factor in the loss of visibility, loss of traction (hydroplaning), and the potential risk of getting caught in flooding runoff. Thunderstorms may also bring along hail; if the hailstones are big, the storm can be brutal and dangerous.
- *There are times* when travel during foul weather conditions is unavoidable. On these occasions, planning and preparation is essential to safely accomplish the trip, even if it is just to work or across town.

Following are a few of the many weather related roadway hazards vehicle operators should be aware of:

- *When a road has* been dry for some time and precipitation first appears and wets the surface, residues of lubricants leaked from passing vehicles float to the surface. This creates slippery conditions that have caused serious mishaps to many unwary motorists.
- *Freezing cold weather* with ice and snow is probably the trickiest conditions in which to safely operate a motor vehicle.
- *Tire chains or cables*, tire studs, or a four-wheel-drive vehicle are the best way to deal with low traction environments.
- *Slippery surfaces* significantly reduce traction which must be recognized and prepared for. Be aware that rear wheel drive vehicles are hard to control in the snow. Accelerate carefully on slippery surfaces. Add temporary weight to the rear of the vehicle to increase traction. Lightly pump brakes to slow down or stop. If you start to fishtail, steer into the direction of the skid.
- *Blowing snow* is a hazard due to obstructing vision and reflecting headlight glare into the vehicle operator's eyes. The low-beam setting on headlights or fog lamps work best in this situation and always keep the hazard lights on. It is always best to avoid travel while it is snowing.
- *Driving in diminished visibility* conditions is a safety risk, and the degree of visual restriction determines the amount of danger. The primary hazard is of running into a vehicle, to be run into from behind, or to run into a deer or pedestrian.
- *Watch for ice on bridges* and overpasses even if no ice is present on the rest of the roadway.
- *If one cannot see* the roadway traffic to the front, the sensible approach is to pull off to the roadside as far as safely possible, and wait for the hazardous conditions to clear.
- *Never completely stop* on the road because of poor visibility conditions. In situations where visibility is merely slightly restricted, slow down and proceed with caution.



When traveling in frigid weather of any kind, extra precautions and preparations are vital in protecting the safety of all persons involved. The vehicle must be prepared and mechanically sound prior to traveling in adverse weather conditions.

- *Proceeding with travel plans* in a poorly maintained vehicle is inviting trouble.
- *Make sure the tires* are in good shape and properly inflated. Check that the spare tire is in good shape and properly inflated and that the jack and tools needed to change a tire are present. Take along tire chains, cables, or other traction aids.
- *Ensure the vehicle's* radiator, belts, hoses, anti-freeze/coolant, and heating equipment have been recently checked and serviced.
- *Warm clothing* must be provided for every member of the traveling party, even if not worn.
- *Other considerations* for cold weather travel would be to keep basic comfort items in the trunk, such as plenty of drinking water, a first aid kit, food or snacks, extra blankets, and flashlights.



Conclusion: If unprepared, a breakdown in frigid conditions could be a tragedy. If it is known that travel will be required in unfriendly weather, it is important to keep abreast of the current weather conditions in your area by simply tuning in to the local weather forecast. Knowing what weather conditions you'll be facing will help with planning and preparing for a safe trip. Follow these safety tips for safe driving in severe weather.

Work Site Review

Work-Site Hazards and Safety Suggestions: _____

Personnel Safety Violations: _____

Employee Signatures: _____
(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness.)

City of San Angelo Foreman/Supervisor's Signature: _____

These guidelines do not supercede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.