



# Winter Driving Safety

## Tailgate Meeting Guide

### Prepare your vehicle for winter

You may know how to drive for winter conditions – braking in snow, handling a skid, and more. But what if your vehicle does not respond? A winter-ready vehicle is just as important as good driving skills.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of workplace deaths in British Columbia. On average, the number of crashes where someone is injured or killed on BC roads due to driving too fast for the conditions almost doubles from nearly 121 in October to over 234 in December.\*

A winter-ready vehicle allows you to better handle winter conditions. Here's what to do:

#### 1. Install four matched winter tires with the winter tire logo.

- Winter tires provide better traction in cold weather (7 degrees Celsius or less). When the temperature dips below 7 degrees, the rubber in all-season tires begins to harden. This means less elasticity and traction on the road.
- Check your tire pressure once a month, or more, depending on temperature changes (tire pressure drops in colder conditions).
- Tires marked with an M+S are also legally acceptable but do not provide the same degree of performance as a mountain snowflake tire in severe winter conditions.
- Winter tires, to qualify as legal, must have a tread at least 3.5 mm deep.



#### 2. Give your vehicle a check-up.

- Before each trip, do a 'circle check' (walk around your vehicle to inspect its overall condition).
- Review your vehicle's maintenance record. Take it in for repair if needed and report any concerns to the company.
- Make sure the battery, brakes, lights, fuses, cooling/heating systems, exhaust/electrical systems, belts and hoses are in good shape.
- Keep the gas tank full to avoid condensation in the tank which can cause fuel lines to freeze.

#### 3. Equip your vehicle with a winter survival kit.

Recommended items are an approved high-visibility vest, non-perishable food, blankets, first aid supplies, windshield scraper, snow brush, spare tire, wheel wrench & jack, shovel & traction mat, sand or kitty litter, fuel line antifreeze, flares & matches or lighter, tire chains & gloves, flashlight & extra batteries, battery jumper cables, sandbags for extra weight, extra clothing & footwear.

### Know before you go.

Before heading out:

- Visit [DriveBC.ca](http://DriveBC.ca) for current road conditions.
- Visit [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](http://ShiftIntoWinter.ca) for tips on ways to prepare yourself, your vehicle, and how to drive safely on winter roads.

\* ICBC Casualty Crashes by Contributing Factor. Driving Too Fast for the Conditions 2009 – 2013 Police Reported Data



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### Winter tire information

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of workplace deaths in British Columbia. Whether you drive for work full time or part time, your vehicle is your 'workplace on wheels'. Winterize it to maximize your safety.

#### Why winter tires?

An investment in appropriate tires represents an investment in safety — your personal safety, the safety of your family and friends, and the safety of others sharing the road.



The tire industry indicates winter tires with the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol outperform mud and snow (M+S tires) at temperatures of 7 degrees Celsius or lower.

The natural rubber compound in these tires helps them to stay soft and flexible in colder temperatures. Check the wear of your winter tires before installing and monitor tire pressure often as it can drop in cold weather.

#### The different types of winter tires

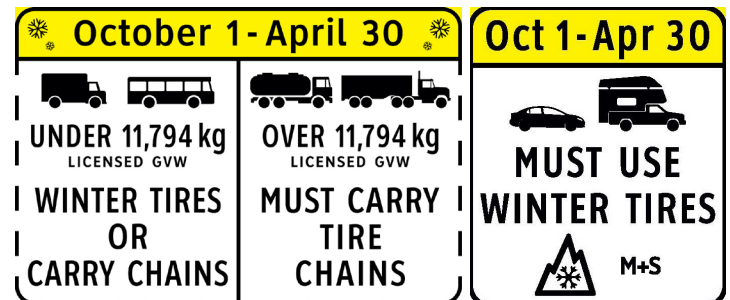
Tires with a 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol offer the best traction on snow, ice, and in cold weather. They provide good winter driving performance, especially in harsh winter conditions.

All-season tires with the M+S symbol offer better traction than summer tires and meet the minimum legal requirement for a winter tire. But, in severe winter conditions, they are less effective than the 3-peaked mountain/snowflake tires.

In all cases, a winter tire must be in good condition, with a minimum tread of 3.5 mm (5/32").

#### Obey the signs

Winter tires or chains are required on most routes in British Columbia from October 1 to March 31. For select highways, including mountain passes and rural routes in high snowfall areas, the date will be extended until April 30 to account for early-spring snowfall. Visit [DriveBC.ca](https://drivebc.ca) for information on winter tire requirements for various highways. You'll also find chain-up instructions.



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# Winter Driving Safety

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## Preparing to drive

During the winter months, road hazards increase significantly due to rain, snow, ice, and fog.

The best way to stay safe is to always Know Before You Go. That means planning BEFORE you get behind the wheel. A few websites to help you plan your route:

- **DriveBC.ca:** For the latest weather and road conditions, highway cams, and delay information.
- **B.C. Weather Warnings:** Call toll-free 1-800-550-4997 for 24-hour B.C. road information.

Try to avoid driving when road and weather conditions are bad. If you have to drive, ask yourself if you can cancel your trip, or delay it until the weather improves. Even an hour or two can make a difference.

### Once you're behind the wheel:

- Avoid roads that become dangerous (black ice, hard packed snow, slush) during bad weather. Respect road closure signs and barriers.
- Leave lots of time so you're not rushing. Keep at least four seconds distance between you and the vehicle in front – in case you have to brake suddenly.

- Learn and practice how to brake safely, get out of a skid, and how your work vehicle handles in winter weather.
- Dress comfortably and have warm clothing on hand (winter boots, coat, gloves, and hat) in case you have to leave your vehicle.
- Have an emergency survival kit and an emergency plan. If you get stuck or stranded, follow the company's procedures. If you have a cell, call 911 if it's an emergency. Otherwise, call for roadside assistance.

A few minutes planning your route beforehand prevents problems when you're on the road. It reduces your stress. It increases your safety. It's smart driving.

## Know before you go.

Before heading out:

- Visit **DriveBC.ca** for current road conditions.
- Visit **ShiftIntoWinter.ca** for tips on ways to prepare yourself, your vehicle, and how to drive safely on winter roads.



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## Driving in winter

During winter, the road hazards jump dramatically due to winter weather. When you're behind the wheel, driving is your only job. A few reminders to help you drive safely:

- Give yourself extra time for work travel. Adjust your schedule, if possible, so you're not rushing.
- Drop your speed. The posted speed limit is for ideal road conditions. In winter, slow it down – no matter how skilled you are at driving.
- Follow at a safe distance. It takes longer to stop on a slippery road. Leave at least four seconds between you and the vehicle in front.
- Watch for black ice. Shaded areas, bridges, and overpasses freeze sooner than other areas – even in sunshine. Slow down.
- Avoid sudden moves. Accelerating, braking, turning – do everything gently and gradually to avoid spinning your tires or your vehicle.

- Know how to handle a skid. If you begin to skid, ease off the brake or accelerator and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go.
- Help out your co-workers by reporting hazards such as poor weather, vehicle or road conditions to your supervisor.
- If you become stuck or stranded, follow the company's procedures. Stay with the vehicle for warmth and safety. Call for roadside assistance if needed. If it's an emergency, call 911.
- Keep a winter survival kit in your work vehicle. You can find details at [ShiftIntoWinter.ca](http://ShiftIntoWinter.ca).

## Know before you go.

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## Driving in rainy weather

Rain can be just as dangerous as snow or ice. Reduced visibility through your windshield is just part of the challenge. Add colder temperatures, reduced daylight hours, sleet, spray, and flooding – and your driving skills are going to be put to the test.

Here are a few tips for a safer drive during wet conditions:

- Windshield wipers are your first defense. Are they old or brittle? If so, replace them.
- Use your headlights even in light rain or overcast conditions. They help you see the road, and allow other drivers to see you.
- Change the way you use your brakes. If possible, when slowing down, take your foot off the accelerator instead of relying on your brakes.
- If you pass through deep water, check your brakes afterwards. They could be wet. To help dry them, drive really slowly while lightly braking at the same time. Make sure you're pulling evenly on all wheels before you build up speed again.

- Middle lanes are best. Water often pools in outside lanes. Try to drive in the tracks of the vehicle in front of you.
- Be extra cautious right after it rains. Water mixes with oil and other deposits on the road and increases your chance of slipping or skidding.
- Stay well back from large trucks or buses. Their large tires spray. If you have to pass a large vehicle, do it quickly and safely.
- Watch for hydroplaning or aquaplaning. It's when water on the road gathers in front of your vehicle faster than your tires can push it away, and usually happens at speeds over 60 km per hour. Your car can lose contact with the road, and in less than a second you could slide out of your lane.

## Know before you go.

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# Winter Driving Safety

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### Driving in foggy weather

When fog appears, visibility can deteriorate in a matter of seconds. Even creeping along at 10 to 15 km per hour can be dangerous. See if you can cancel or delay your trip if the conditions are dangerous. An hour or two can make a difference to visibility.

If you have to drive, follow these guidelines:

- Always plan your work route ahead of time. Stick to well-travelled roads and avoid routes that could become dangerous. Check current road conditions via local radio or [DriveBC.ca](http://DriveBC.ca).
- Watch your speedometer. Fog creates an illusion of slow motion when you could actually be speeding.
- Drive with your headlights on. Use fog lights if you have them.
- Your natural response may be to switch on your high beams. Don't. Fog reflects the light back to you, limiting your visibility.

- Use your wipers and defrosters as needed for maximum visibility.
- Use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide.
- Avoid stopping on a freeway or a busy road. If your vehicle stalls, move away from the vehicle and to the side of the road to avoid injury.

### Know before you go.

Before heading out:

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WINTER DRIVING  
SAFETY ALLIANCE

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## Driving in snow

Snow can make driving on even the simplest road unpredictable and possibly dangerous. You can't predict how your work vehicle – or other vehicles – will react once it snows.

### A few facts:

- Hard-packed snow on a road can be as slippery as ice.
- Snow can be rutted and full of hard tracks and snow 'gullies' that can throw your vehicle off track.
- Wet snow can make for slushy roads. Heavy slush can build up in the wheel wells and affect your ability to steer.
- Slush and spray from other vehicles can cause sudden loss of visibility.

### Follow the general rules of driving in snow:

- Before you head out, check road conditions on the radio or visit [DriveBC.ca](http://DriveBC.ca).
- Stick to well-travelled routes. Avoid roads that may become dangerous.
- Sweep snow and ice from all parts of your vehicle – windows, mirrors, lights, wheel wells, and your hood. Wait until all windows are fully defrosted before pulling away.

- While driving, be prepared for sudden slush or spray from other vehicles. A smart way to prepare is to reduce your speed; keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel.
- Give yourself lots of distance between you and the vehicle in front – at least four seconds.
- When you approach an intersection, really slow down. Just a few inches of packed snow can make stopping a challenge. You want to avoid collisions with OTHER vehicles that might be sliding through the area.
- Be careful when approaching maintenance vehicles such as snowplows, salt or sand trucks. They often spray snow making it tough to see.
- If you're stuck or stranded, follow the company's procedures. Stay with your vehicle for safety and warmth. If you have a cellphone, call for roadside assistance. In an emergency call 911.

## Know before you go.

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### Driving on icy roads

When the roads are icy, you not only have to watch yourself, you have to watch for others sliding into your path. Learn how to drive on ice before you get behind the wheel.

#### Here are a few more tips:

- Watch for black ice – a thin layer of transparent ice that forms when it's near freezing. How can you tell it's out there? Often, you can't. If there's ice build-up on your windshield, it's a clue that black ice is probably on the road.
- Slow down when you approach shaded areas, bridges and overpasses. These sections freeze sooner than others. Also watch for sections of the road that appear black and shiny. Any of these areas can cause a vehicle to suddenly lose traction and skid.
- If you begin skidding, gradually release pressure from whichever pedal you're using (brake or accelerator). Smoothly steer in the direction you want the car to go. Smooth steering is the key to recovering from a skid.

- Slow down – especially when approaching an intersection. It takes longer to stop on ice. As well, watch for vehicles sliding through the intersection. When starting up, accelerate slowly to avoid spinning your wheels.
- Watch for hills. Pick a path that provides the most traction – unpacked snow or powder provide a better grip. Watch the cars ahead of you to see where they're spinning their wheels or sliding so that you can avoid those spots.

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Manager's remarks:

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Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

(signature) (signature)

