A variety of winter weather conditions—including snow, slush, ice and sleet—can create hazards on the road. In fact, the U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that crashes stemming from these conditions result in 116,800 injuries and 1,300 fatalities each year.

As such, employees who must get behind the wheel during winter—whether it’s to make a delivery, transport materials or travel to the job site—should take additional precautions to stay safe. If you find yourself driving in adverse conditions on the job this winter, be sure to uphold these safety measures:

• Allow yourself extra time to get to your destination.

• Slow down ahead of turns and curves, as this will allow you to prepare for potential icy spots.

• Apply power slightly to the gas and steer steadily when at a curve. Do not change directions abruptly and refrain from braking suddenly.

• Be prepared for lane changes. Check your rearview mirror and blind spot, and then signal your direction to alert other motorists.

• Move over in a long, gradual line with minimal steering changes when changing lanes.

• Look out for ice patches and spots with snow buildup. These areas are skidding hazards.

• Anticipate stops by slowing down gradually, well ahead of intersections. These areas are generally slicker than other parts of the road because of the excess starting and stopping traffic.

• Drive at reduced speeds. Slow your speed and increase your following distance behind the vehicle in front of you. This will allow for a larger buffer in case you start to lose control.

• Avoid over powering your vehicle in deep snow.

• Use a light foot on the accelerator rather than slamming on the gas to move forward.

If you have any further questions about winter driving safety on the job, contact your supervisor.
TOP TIPS FOR DE-ICING OUTDOOR WALKING SURFACES

Keeping outdoor walking surfaces—such as parking lots and sidewalks—clear of ice in the winter is a crucial practice at many workplaces. Not only does ice removal offer aesthetic benefits, it can also help keep you, your co-workers and the general public (e.g., customers or passersby) protected from the risk of slips and trips on the job site.

With this in mind, here's how you can play your part in promoting effective and safe de-icing measures at the workplace this winter:

- Use the right mixture. The most effective method for de-icing an outdoor walking surface is by applying a chemical mixture throughout the area to either melt any ice that already exists or prevent ice from forming altogether. This mixture typically includes rock salt (sodium chloride), magnesium chloride pellets or calcium chloride pellets. That being said, make sure to use the correct mixture for the conditions at hand.

- Watch the weather. Keep an eye on the weather forecast to determine when you need to apply the de-icing mixture to outdoor walking surfaces. This mixture should be applied when temperatures are below freezing or if conditions such as snow, hail or sleet are possible.

- Apply the mixture correctly. Make sure you apply the de-icing mixture in thin, even layers across outdoor walking surfaces. Try to apply one layer before conditions occur, one or more layers while these conditions are taking place and a final layer after conditions have passed. Keep in mind that if there is snow on a surface, it will need to be shoveled first before you can apply the de-icing mixture. Simplify the de-icing process by shoveling snow after every few inches of accumulation rather than all at once.

- Protect your hands. Keep your hands properly protected when applying the de-icing mixture by wearing thick mittens and using a scoop to distribute the mixture.

- Eliminate excess materials. When temperatures warm up and the de-icing mixture is no longer necessary, be sure to properly dispose of any remaining mixture left across outdoor walking surfaces. Leaving excess mixture on a surface when it isn't needed could end up creating, rather than removing, slip and trip hazards, as well as potentially damaging the surface itself.

Consult your supervisor for more information on proper de-icing procedures at the workplace.

For more information, please contact us at 1-800-638-8048 or OHS@NFP.com.

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