

Foul Weather Driving

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

Foul Weather Driving

Bad weather affects all roads. Our interstate system is a marvelous example of modern engineering, but no matter how good the road is, it is dangerous when there is sleet, snow or ice on the roadway. Speed must be reduced on slippery roads.

When road conditions are slippery, drivers must look farther ahead so they can anticipate emergencies and avoid the need for sudden maneuvers. Most skids are caused by last-second stops and turns on slippery pavements.

Extra care must be taken on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop in case the highway isn't clear ahead. On a downgrade, both loss of traction and gravity are working against you.

Don't attempt to drive around or through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The same conditions that caused their trouble may still be there when you arrive. When there is no room to get through, you must be prepared to stop.

During the winter months, snow- and ice-covered truck lots are prevalent in all parts of Ohio. Good drivers will allow more clearance between their vehicles and other vehicles and fixed objects when maneuvering on bad surfaces. A pile of snow or an ice rut may throw vehicles off just enough to cause them to strike a stationary object, if not enough clearance has been allowed.

Drivers of vehicles with air brakes must take care to protect their air supply in freezing weather. Brake line freeze can be annoying and dangerous. Many newer trucks are equipped with synthetic air lines, so the old solution of melting the ice with a fusee or torch is no longer a quick solution. If the vehicle is not equipped with an air dryer or other means of automatically expelling water and other contaminants from the air tanks, the driver must take the time to manually drain the air tanks every day.

The lighting systems of vehicles become especially important during the winter months. Nights are longer and visibility is often reduced by bad weather.

Electrical systems are winter-sensitive. Approximately 80 percent of all light bulb failure is due to environmental reasons. Drivers must inspect their lights more often during the winter and clean them when necessary so they can see and be seen by other highway users.

Foul weather driving is much more strenuous. Drivers need proper rest before every trip, and while in route, fresh air helps keep drivers alert. An open window is an old safety practice, and it helps drivers hear what is going on around their vehicles.

After all precautions are taken and good practices are followed there still will be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Good drivers will pull off the road at the first safe place, notify their companies of the delay and wait until conditions improve before continuing.