

Safety

Winter Driving

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As we enter into the fall driving and then into the winter season, it is time for all the winter driving tips. It is never the wrong time to remind us of the basics of driving on winter roads. Statistically speaking this time is the most dangerous time to be driving. More driving in the dark, changing road conditions, and complacency settle in from good summer driving.

I am tempted to make a list of the usual safe driving ideas. Drive slower, watch out for ice, steer into a slide, make sure your tires are good, clean your windshield every day. These are age-old and good ideas, but I would like to give you another angle to these thoughts. Put any of the winter driving tips into a bucket, and you get "pay attention, plan ahead and communicate."

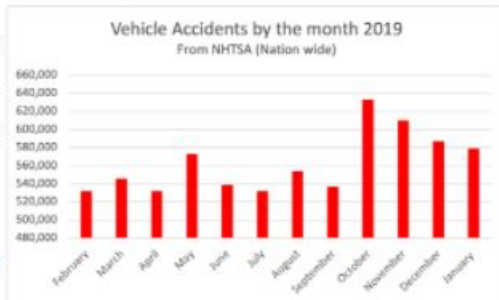
Check the weather. If it is going to be a lousy commute, leave earlier than usual, so you don't have to push to get to work on time. Next, pay attention to common bad road areas. You know the lousy corner or the bridge on the bottom of the hill on a turn. Plan how you will drive through this area, or maybe, if possible, take an alternate route. The next thought is to encourage everyone to communicate when and where they are traveling on the roads, public or company roads. This helps to keep the roads safe and helps move pickups in and the wood out. Look at your trucking and operator schedule

and see if you can make changes, maybe as little as 10 minutes, to keep two-way traffic to a minimum.

Encourage your employees to communicate exactly where they are on the woods road even when it shows that they are late or had done something not so clever. Years ago, I came across three pickups off the road on a known to be dangerous corner, and it all started when the first truck was going too fast and went into the ditch and did not say anything about the corner being extra slippery. So, when the next pickup came across this, not only did they need to miss the pickup in the ditch, but they too were driving too fast for the corner and into the ditch they went. Same story for the third pickup. Three mistakes, not one word on the CB about the issue. Yes, it is embarrassing when you end up in the ditch but haven't we have all been there one time or another?

We needed to bring a grapple skidder out and rough up the road and pull the three pickups back into the road.

So, again, encourage everyone to communicate issues even when it doesn't make them look good. Paying attention, planning & communicating will go a long way to getting us all what we really want, back home at night with our feet up in front of the TV with a warm plate of food on our lap.



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