



Winter Weather Hazards

Once the holiday season is over, Winter is “officially” here. And that winter weather can create a variety of conditions including snow, ice, rain, and freezing temperatures. Each one of these weather conditions is associated with different hazards, but with a little bit of preparation and awareness, you can be safe in all kinds of weather.

Driving in winter weather can be dangerous. Your commute can take much longer when there is new snow on the roads. Ice can build up on roadways and bridges, making conditions slippery and treacherous. Winter tires can make a difference if you live in the north. In the south, rain can accumulate on roadways and cause your vehicle to hydroplane dangerously. Don't drive across roads that are flooded. You could be swept away by a sudden surge.

It's important to maintain a safe speed in bad weather. Allow extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes. Keep your windshield, windows, and mirrors clear. Always buckle your seat belt and make sure your passengers do too.

Slips, Trips, and Falls can also be serious hazards during winter weather. Snow, ice, rain, and mud can accumulate on all kinds of surfaces: parking lots, sidewalks, walkways, steps, and ladders. Getting around safely can be a challenge. Walk carefully and always keep your eyes on your path. Avoid walking on wet or slippery surfaces whenever possible. Report slip and fall hazards when you encounter them. Wear appropriate footwear that will provide good traction. Give yourself extra time to get where you're going. Wear eye protection to ensure that wind, rain, and snow don't affect your ability to see clearly.

Cold-related illnesses can be avoided if you dress for the weather. Layer your clothing. The inner layer should wick moisture, the middle layer should absorb perspiration and retain warmth, and the outer layer should protect against wind and allow for some ventilation. Be sure to keep your feet and hands warm and dry. Bring a change of clothes to work so you can change into dry pants, gloves, or socks in case the things you are wearing get wet. Know the symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite. Take a break to get warm when you need to. Work with a partner and keep an eye on each other.

Be Prepared for Winter Weather. You can protect your family, your home, and your car by planning ahead. Before the start of the winter season, create a home disaster supply kit that includes a weather radio in case you become isolated in your home due to weather conditions. You should also keep a winter emergency kit in each of your



vehicles. Make sure you have good winter tires with enough tread. Try to keep the gas tank at least half full in case heavy snow causes severe traffic delays or you need to drive to an emergency shelter. Conduct regular maintenance on your vehicle.

SAFETY REMINDER

If you use portable heaters to keep warm, be sure to have fire extinguishers handy.