

Newsletter

Winter 2021



Staying Safe on Winter Roads

With the holidays quickly approaching, demand for packages and delivery drivers is picking up. Yet, amid the season's festivities, the winter months can bring additional uncertainty to the roads due to dropping temperatures, decreased visibility and increased vehicle maintenance. Though inclement weather can make this time of year more challenging, planning and preparation can help professional drivers navigate the roads safely.

To help drivers prepare for the season, we have rounded up our top recommendations for driving this winter. Stay safe on the roads with these tips and reminders for couriers.



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Top Off Fluids: Double check your fluid levels, especially antifreeze and winter-grade washer fluid, to make sure everything is at a safe level and ready for the cold weather. You can check these manually or take your vehicle in for routine maintenance with a mechanic.

Keep Your Windshield Clear: In addition to making sure your windshield washer fluid is filled, check your wiper blades to ensure they are not cracked or worn down. Old, cracked wiper blades can cause smudging and streaking, sometimes making it even more difficult to see in rain, sleet or snow. You can also use your AC to defrost and defog your windshield. The cold dry air will help keep the glass clear, allowing you to maintain visibility. If your windshield is covered in a heavy layer of ice, you can use cold water and an ice scraper to remove the ice from the exterior. Be careful not to use hot or warm water, as it can crack the windshield glass.

Stay Up to Date with the Weather: Check the weather before heading out and use GPS to find alternative routes whenever necessary. Being aware of potential weather changes can help you better prepare and have a backup plan if needed. If the weather is especially bad and alternate routes cannot be found, it may be necessary to delay your trip until driving conditions are safe.

Pack Extra Supplies: It is hard to prepare for the unpredictable, but you can do your best to have backup supplies on hand in case you get stuck or stranded due to the inclement weather. Create your own version of an “emergency care package” for yourself, including items such as:

- Warm clothes, including a reflective and/or waterproof jacket, gloves and a hat
- Heavy blanket
- Flashlight
- Ice scraper
- First aid kit
- Jumper cables
- Tire chains
- Car jack
- Shovel
- Small tool kit
- Portable phone charger
- Medications
- Food and water
- Any additional essentials you would need if you were to get stuck or stranded

Clean Headlights: Headlights can become cloudy or foggy due to oxidation or build up from environmental factors. When this happens, it causes

them to dim and decreases overall visibility for you and other drivers. This can be compounded during the winter, when snow or rain can further reduce visibility and the sun sets earlier in the day. Regularly check and clean your headlights and any other reflective surfaces on your vehicle to ensure other motorists can clearly see you on the road. You may also want to check your other lights, including tail and brake lights, as well.

Stay Away from Cruise Control: Being able to adapt quickly and respond to any sudden changes in road conditions, weather or other drivers’ actions is essential in winter weather. Using cruise control, especially if it is set on a speed too high for the wet road conditions, can cause your vehicle to skid, slide, spin or hydroplane over wet, slippery or icy roads. Avoiding cruise control allows you to maintain control and be a more responsive, agile driver on wet or slick roads.

Look Out for Black Ice: Black ice is one of the most treacherous obstacles drivers can face on the road during cold weather. Also known as clear ice, it is an ultra-thin layer of ice that is transparent, making it nearly invisible. Sometimes, it can appear like a wet patch on the road, rather than an ice patch, giving unprepared drivers a false sense of security when approaching it at high speeds. Try to slow down before reaching a patch of black ice but be careful not to brake while driving over it. You will not have traction on the ice and braking can cause you to skid or slide across the ice. Black ice is most often found on covered areas, where the sun cannot easily reach to melt the ice, or on bridges and overpasses, because cold air below the elevated pavement can bring down the ground’s temperature.

Take Extra Care Over Bridges: Slow down and drive carefully when approaching bridges. Bridges and other elevated structures, such as highway overpasses, often freeze more quickly than other areas of the road and are notoriously dangerous for drivers. As mentioned above, bridges are more likely to be covered in black ice. Avoid braking, speeding or changing lanes on bridges and overpasses whenever possible.

Know When to Wait It Out: Use your best judgment to know when to pull off the road. If conditions become unsafe, don’t be afraid to wait it out until the weather clears up and you feel comfortable venturing back out on the road. If possible, check in with your company’s dispatch center to update them on the conditions. Keep your safety at the top of your priority list.



Tires: Caution is King When it Comes to Winter Driving

(BPT) - With the winter in full swing, ensuring your tires - the last line of defense between your vehicle and harsh conditions - are in working order may be the difference between an enjoyable or stressful travel season. Caution is king when it comes to winter driving

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 17% of all vehicle collisions take place during winter conditions, many of which can be attributed to underinflated, over-worn or out-of-season tires.

“Being on the side of the road due to a preventable vehicle issue is both inconvenient and dangerous,” said Brandon Sturgis, product manager, BFGoodrich Tires. “Before winter arrives, make sure that your car is in its best condition to handle winter weather.”

Below are a few simple tips from BFGoodrich Tires to help ensure your vehicle and tires are better prepared for safe driving this winter.

Tire pressure will change with the weather

Many drivers neglect their tires until it's too late and experience a tire issue, an inconvenience that only increases during the winter months. To avoid a winter accident caused by unsafe tires, drivers should proactively take measures to maintain their tires. An easy first step is to check the air pressure of all four tires at least monthly. This is especially important during the colder winter months as a drop in temperatures can cause tire pressures to decrease below a vehicle's recommended inflation levels. To find the manufacturer's recommended tire pressure, look at the decal in the driver's door jamb or in the owner's manual.

Checking your tread should be routine

Many drivers try squeezing as much life out of their

tires as possible and run them even after the tread has worn below 2/32 of an inch - the minimum tread deemed safe under the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. If this is you, be sure to stay honest about checking your tread. To do so, find a penny and insert Abraham Lincoln headfirst into the lowest tread on your tire. If any portion of Abe's head is covered, your tread depth is sufficient. If Honest Abe is still fully visible, your tread is below 2/32 of an inch and the ability to perform in wet and winter conditions is substantially reduced.

The importance of seasonal tires

Understanding your driving environment is as important as understanding which tires best suit your circumstances. Geography is the most intuitive factor playing into one's driving environment, but certain locations create a more nuanced experience. Do you know which tires are best for your situation?

For example, all-terrain tires such as the BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KO2 are suitable year-round tires designed to give you superior grip both off and on the pavement thanks to innovative tread design, tough sidewalls and long-lasting durability.

If you drive in an environment that is regularly below freezing with snow and ice, winter tires may be your best choice. For those yet to treat their vehicle to winter tires during the cold months, consider the BFGoodrich Winter T/A KSI a good starting point. Offering extreme traction in winter conditions and reassuring steering control and durability, your next set of winter tires may keep you from becoming another winter driving collision statistic.

“Tires play a key role in your winter weather mobility. Knowing what kind of tires you have on your car and knowing their condition are part of being prepared,” says Sturgis.

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