

DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



Winterize Yourself

January 2022

Winter is the most difficult driving season. Not only do you have snow and ice to deal with, but there are fewer hours of daylight as well. In addition, many of the people with whom you share the road lack the skills and the temperament to safely navigate the roadways in snow, ice and fog. It goes without saying that you need to take time before every trip to know and understand weather and traffic conditions. You need to ensure your equipment is in peak operating conditions—paying special attention to tires, lighting, windshield wipers and washer fluids.

Driving in the winter means snow, sleet and ice, which can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers, and unforeseen dangers. Once on the road, you need to be prepared, patient and cautious.

But are you as "winterized" as your truck?

- During the wintertime, icy running boards, steps and trailer decks account for thousands of slip-and-fall accidents. While most are relatively minor, every year a few drivers are paralyzed for life from these incidents. Be extra cautious when getting in and out of your truck or when loading and unloading.
- Frostbite is another problem. Many frostbite injuries come from not wearing proper headgear and gloves when you are outside your truck, making deliveries, refueling or conducting your pre/post-trip inspection. The right clothing is the key to staying injury-free and behind the wheel.
- A good place to start self-winterizing is with your shoes. Make sure you wear good quality footwear with oil-resistant soles and some ankle support. Save your cowboy boots for the summer as they can be particularly slippery in bad weather.
- You may want to invest in a good pair of boot traction grips. They have been proven to reduce slips and falls.
- Many falls are the result of twisting an ankle to the side when getting out of your truck. Good ankle support can minimize this problem. Treat your work boots with a quality water-sealing product and keep a good coat of polish on them to retain their waterproofing.
- Always ensure you are maintaining three points of contact when getting in and out of your truck. This means three parts of your body are touching the truck at all times to minimize injury.
- Whenever you are outside in freezing weather, be sure to wear gloves, a hat (most body heat escapes through the head), and in really cold temperatures, make sure your ears are covered.
- Pack a change of clothes and a warm jacket.
- Take along some granola bars, dried fruits and nuts, and other high energy good and water or sports drinks in case you get stranded. Hard candy can keep your mouth moist while providing some degree of energy. It's best to avoid salty foods.

As the saying goes "luck favors the prepared." Doing so in the winter could save you a lot of money, not to mention pain and stress.