

TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

Working Safely When You Drive

Every time you step into a vehicle, you face a potential driving hazard. Professional drivers, who spend the majority of their workday behind the wheel, are at an even greater risk. Take a few minutes to review these basic tips for working safely when you drive. Be a safe driver, not a statistic.

Your Vehicle Is Your Tool

All workers use tools, from office equipment to industrial machinery. Your tool is your vehicle. Treat your vehicle like you would any tool—use it with respect and keep it in good condition. Check your vehicle frequently—at least once a week—to be sure that brakes, accelerator, belts, radiator, oil, battery, tires, head lamps, wipers, and brake lights are all in good working condition. If you notice *anything* abnormal in the way your vehicle sounds or operates, have it repaired by a qualified mechanic immediately.

Drive Defensively

You can't assume that everyone on the road is as good a driver as you


are. Steer clear of drivers who swerve in and out of lanes, respond slowly to traffic signals, or appear to be driving erratically. Pay special attention at intersections. Wait before accelerating when a red light turns green, never accelerate through a yellow signal, and always yield the right of way. Pass only in designated passing zones, and only after you've checked blind spots for clearance. Use the four-second rule for establishing safe following distance. (When the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed object—like a signpost—begin counting "one Mississippi, two Mississippi," etc. until your vehicle reaches the same object.) If you can't count to four before passing the same object, you're driving too close.

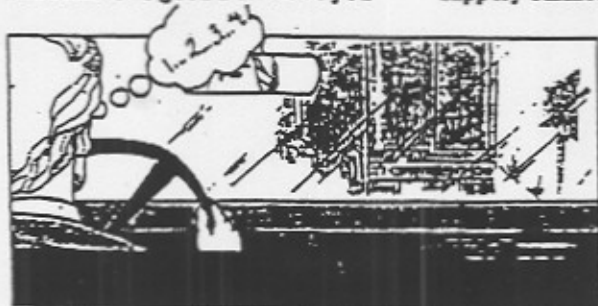
Tune Into The Weather

Before you begin any trip, check for weather conditions along your route. If roads are slick from rain, ice, or poor surfaces, reduce your speed and proceed cautiously. Use low-gear on steep grades or slippery surfaces. If you should

skid, *do not brake*. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator, and turn in the direction you want the front wheels to go. In dense fog or heavy rain, where visibility is bad, pull to the side of the road, if possible, and wait until conditions improve. (Keep your emergency flashers on so that oncoming drivers can see you.) When you start to drive again, use low-beams until fog clears.

Stay Alert

The best defense you have against potential accidents is your own ability to remain alert and aware while driving. That's why alcohol, drugs, or other medications can be lethal when you drive. They affect your ability to concentrate and impair your reaction time which can lead to injury, disability, and all too often, death—not only of the driver, but of innocent victims as well. If you're angry, distracted, or tired, don't get behind the wheel—you'll be less able to react to potentially dangerous situations. Be alert, be aware, and be safe—that's the professional way to drive. 



Use the four-second rule for establishing safe following distance.



Alcohol, drugs, or other medications can impair your driving skills.

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WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Driving In Snow And Ice

There's nothing more beautiful than a fresh blanket of new-fallen snow. Unless, of course, you're driving in it. Winter snow and ice pose special problems for even the most experienced driver. Take a few moments to learn these basic rules of winter driving safety. When you're prepared for winter driving emergencies, you'll be able to say "let it snow, let it snow, let it snow"—and mean it!

Winterize Your Car

When the weather turns frosty, prepare your car for the season—get a complete tune-up. Ask your mechanic to test brakes, battery, and exhaust system, check fluid levels, add anti-freeze, and switch to winter-weight oil. Install snow tires on drive wheels, and be sure to carry emergency tools in your trunk—sand, salt, shovel, chains, snow-scraper/brush, booster cables, blankets, and flashlight.

What To Do If You Skid

The primary problem faced by winter drivers is skidding on slick or icy roadways. If your car should skid, *do not brake*. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and turn your car in the direction that you want the front wheels to go. (Use gentle, steady motions

when turning the steering wheel. Turning too much or too fast can worsen the situation.) If for any reason you are unable to gain control of your car, try steering into a snowbank to stop your vehicle.

What To Do If You're Stuck

An equally common problem is getting stuck in the snow—your wheels spin but your car goes nowhere. This is when emergency equipment is most important. Don't continue to spin your wheels; you'll only wind up in a deeper rut. Instead, pour sand, salt, or gravel around the drive wheels to give them something to grab onto and improve traction. You can also shovel snow away from the wheels and out from under the car to clear a pathway.

Some General Guidelines

Whenever driving conditions are less than ideal, it pays to be cautious. Drive slowly, test your brakes frequently, and never tailgate. Make sure that windshields (front and rear) are clear and that wipers and defrosters are in good working condition. Use low gears when traveling on slick surfaces (especially hills) to give added traction. Listen to weather forecasts, and if weather and visibility are hazardous, stay home! ❏



Be sure to carry emergency tools in your trunk—sand, salt, shovel, chains, snow-scraper/brush, booster cables, blankets, and flashlight.



If your car skids, *do not brake*. Take your foot off the accelerator and turn your car in the direction that you want the front wheels to go.

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FROSTBITE

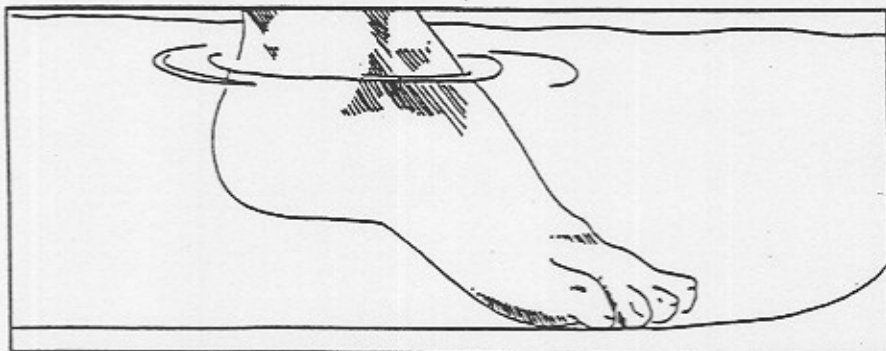
When you are in extreme cold, you expose yourself to frostbite. Often, a victim of frostbite is not even aware of the damage being done. So it is important to know the symptoms and first aid treatment for frostbite. You may save yourself or someone else from serious frostbite injury.

Signs Of Frostbite

Frostbite happens when the fluids and tissues of the skin freeze. When it is very cold, and especially when the wind blows hard, it is difficult to keep the ends of your body warm. Frostbite is a great danger to your nose, cheeks, ears, toes, and fingers. The first sign of frostbite is reddening of the skin. It then turns blotchy white, gray, or yellow. Finally, the skin becomes completely white and sometimes blisters. The body part may feel very cold or numb. In advanced stages of frostbite, there is no feeling at all in the exposed skin. Frostbite victims also suffer from hypothermia or loss of body heat. Symptoms are shivering, loss of hand control, drowsiness, and not caring about staying warm. Hypothermia victims need to get out of the cold immediately.


Treating Frostbite

Keep the victim as warm and dry as possible. Bring the victim inside to a warm place as soon as you can. Warm the frozen body part by putting it in warm (not hot) water, damp cloths, or blankets. Check the water or cloth frequently to make sure it stays warm. Do not



rub or move the frozen part. Place the frostbitten part lower than the head, to increase blood flow. Do not let the person sit close to a stove, heater, or fire. If the frozen part gets too hot, the damage can be worse. *Do not* give the person alcohol. Once the area is thawed, the victim should gently exercise the area. This will bring blood back into the injured part. (If the victim will have to go back into the cold again, do not thaw the frostbitten area, as it will freeze again and cause more damage.) Get medical attention as soon as possible.

Avoid Frostbite

Don't stay out in extreme cold whenever possible. If you must, wear clothing to protect your face, nose, ears, fingers, and toes. If you work in the cold, have a buddy with you, and check each other frequently for frostbite and hypothermia symptoms. When you are in the cold, wiggle your toes and fingers. If they are beginning to lose feeling, are tingling, or painful, come inside and warm up. 

Wear warm gloves, and boots if you must work in extreme cold.

Immerse frostbitten body part in warm (not hot) water. Check water frequently to make sure it's still warm.



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PREVENTING "COLD STRESS"

Protecting Against Hypothermia



Even in warm weather, overexposure to cold water can cause hypothermia.



Layering your clothes allows you to adjust what you're wearing to suit the temperature conditions.

When your body temperature drops even a few degrees below normal (which is about 98.6° F), you can begin to shiver uncontrollably, become weak, drowsy, disoriented, unconscious, even fatally ill. This loss of body heat is known as "cold stress" or hypothermia. Persons who work outdoors, or who enjoy outdoor activities should learn about how to protect against loss of body heat. The following guidelines can help you keep your body warm and avoid the dangerous consequences of hypothermia.

Dress In Layers

Outdoors, indoors, in mild weather or in cold, it pays to dress in layers. Layering your clothes allows you to adjust what you're wearing to suit the temperature conditions. In cold weather, wear cotton, polypropylene, or lightweight wool next to the skin, and wool layers over your undergarments. In warm weather, stick to loose-fitting cotton clothing. For outdoor activities, choose outer garments made of waterproof, wind resistant fabrics such as nylon. And, since a great deal of body heat

is lost through the head, always wear a hat for added protection.

Keep Dry

Water chills your body far more rapidly than air or wind. Even in the heat of summer, falling into a 40° lake can be fatal in a matter of minutes. Always take along a dry set of clothing whenever you are working (or playing) outdoors. Wear waterproof boots in damp or snowy weather, and always pack raingear (even if the forecast calls for sunny skies.)

Take A Companion

The effects of hypothermia can be gradual, and often go unnoticed until it's too late. If you know you'll be outdoors for an extended period of time, take along a companion. (At the very least, let someone know where you'll be and at what time you expect to return.) Ask your companion to check you frequently for overexposure to the cold—do the same for your companion. Check for shivering, slurred speech, mental confusion, drowsiness, and weakness. If either of you shows any of the above signs, get indoors as soon as possible and warm up.

Warmth and Understanding

The key ingredients to preventing loss of body heat are staying warm, and understanding what you can do to protect against conditions that can cause hypothermia. Hypothermia can be fatal, but it can also be prevented.

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CLOTHING: WHAT TO WEAR

- Wool is a popular material for cold because it will keep you warmer than cotton when damp or wet.
- Most synthetics are very similar to wool when damp or wet and are therefore better than cotton.
- Down or quilted synthetic clothes also provide good protection from the cold.

DANGER SIGNALS

If you see an older relative or friend *with any of these signs*, it could mean that they are suffering from hypothermia.

- Confusion
- Puffy Face
- Difficulty Speaking
- Stomach Cold To Touch
- Shivering
- Forgetfulness
- Slow Breathing
- Trembling On One Side Of The Body Or In One Arm Or Leg.
- Sleepy and Hard To Wake Up
- Cold, Stiff Muscles

If You Suspect Hypothermia, Follow The Emergency Instructions At The Bottom Of This Page.

NUTRITION

Good nutrition is very important, especially in winter. Food provides the fuel your body needs to keep warm. Hot, nourishing meals and warm drinks add heat to your body.

DRUGS

Many prescription drugs can make you much more vulnerable to the cold. If you take medication for high blood pressure, nervousness, depression or sleeping, and you have trouble keeping warm, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

FOR HELP

- WITH HEATING YOUR HOME:** Contact your local fuel assistance program. They may be able to provide money for fuel or help with home insulation.
- WITH OTHER SERVICES:** Contact your State or Area Agency on Aging. They can direct you to many services that are available in your community.

MORE INFORMATION

More information on hypothermia can be obtained from:

- Your State Agency on Aging
- Center For Environmental Physiology, Washington, D.C.
- National Institute on Aging, Washington, D.C.

IN AN EMERGENCY — WHAT YOU CAN DO

DO

- KEEP CALM
- CALL A DOCTOR, AMBULANCE, RESCUE SQUAD OR LOCAL EMERGENCY ROOM
- HANDLE THE PERSON VERY GENTLY
- PROTECT THE PERSON FROM THE COLD WITH BLANKETS, QUILTS, TOWELS, OR EXTRA CLOTHES
- MAKE SURE THAT YOU COVER THE HEAD AND NECK

DO NOT

- DO NOT GIVE HOT DRINKS OR HOT FOOD
- DO NOT RAISE THE LEGS OR PLACE HOT WATER BOTTLES ON THE FEET.
- DO NOT PLACE THE PERSON IN A HOT SHOWER OR BATH
- DO NOT GIVE ANY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS
- DO NOT MASSAGE THE ARMS OR LEGS.

This Material on Hypothermia Was Prepared By the Center For Environmental Physiology, in Cooperation With the Administration on Aging and The Older Americans Volunteer Programs/Action.