

C J T Services Ltd

Health and Safety Management

Safety Bulletin 85

Winter Travel Advice

The recent cold snap, which caught some out unawares, has shown the need for people to be prepared when travelling in winter. That's particularly true if you have to drive as part of your work.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), Europe's largest professional health and safety body, has produced a few tips to help ensure your travel, whether it be commuting to or from work or for pleasure, remains safe despite the weather.

1. Driving in severe winter conditions or commuting to work will involve increased risk. Decide first of all if your car journey is really necessary, particularly with technology offering working from home as a solution, or use public transport as an alternative to driving.
2. If you are going to drive in poor winter conditions make sure the vehicle is well maintained. Ensure you have topped up the windscreen wash and that there is enough screen wash liquid to prevent it freezing. Check tyre pressures, oil, coolant and antifreeze levels and top-up if necessary.
3. Think about items it might be useful to have in the car in case of an emergency: a shovel, blanket, some water and food, boots, torch, de-icer and scraper, a couple of old newspapers (to help prevent tyres spinning), hi-vis clothing, mobile phone and map or sat nav to plan an alternative route.
4. If the journey is essential, inform someone where you are going and what time you expect to arrive.
5. It may be better to postpone an early morning journey a short time until the roads have been gritted or dawn has broken.
6. Listen to news and weather reports on the radio prior to and during the journey.
7. While driving be aware of your surroundings so you can report your position should you become stranded.
8. Drive to the road conditions.
9. In the event of being stranded stay in the vehicle and keep the engine running – unless stuck in deep snow where there is a risk of build up of carbon monoxide from exhaust fumes. Use a mobile phone to let someone know where you are stranded.
10. Make your vehicle as visible as possible to emergency services. You can do this by using lights or tying a brightly coloured scarf to the aerial.

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For businesses and other organisations, the wintry weather brings with it additional hazards to premises that must be managed. Slips and trips are the most common cause of winter work hazards, accounting for 39 per cent of major injuries at work and over a quarter of all injuries requiring three or more days off work. In 2007-08 this involved 10,190 major injuries and 26,197 injuries needing three days or more off work.

All employers and businesses need to make sure that frequently used access paths which get covered with frost or snow are cleared, gritted or salted to help prevent people slipping. However, there is no need to clear an entire area of snow if the public or employees are unlikely to walk on it

This bulletin contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory, but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

If you require any further information, clarification or assistance with the above, then please do not hesitate to contact us;

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Source – Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

www.iosh.co.uk