

# *Winter Driving: When the Rules Change*

## **Introduction**

This Leader's Guide is designed to help you conduct a successful safety presentation. This Guide includes the following material:

**Program Outline:** This is a summary of the program content (beginning with the Program Synopsis). If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

**Preparing for and Conducting the Presentation:** This information will help you prepare the training setting, help you relate the program to your specific work situation, and provide objectives for focusing your presentation.

**Discussion Ideas:** A number of ideas are presented that can help encourage discussions related to distracted driving.

**Review Questions and Answers:** The quiz may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

## **Program Synopsis**

Wintertime challenges drivers with a variety of hazards—hazards that we experience at no other time of year—hazards that can take us by surprise if we aren't prepared. But we can protect ourselves on the road if we prepare for winter driving, adjust to the conditions and remind ourselves that during the winter the rules for driving safely have changed. This video dramatically illustrates the importance of adjusting our driving techniques when winter rolls around. Topics include vehicle preparation for winter, adjusting schedules for winter driving conditions, maintaining good visibility, winter driving techniques, including intersections, cornering, skid control, braking and slowing down and winter survival supplies and techniques.

## **Larry's Erratic Winter Driving**

The video begins with sequence featuring the character "Larry" as he makes one mistake after another regarding safe winter driving. He starts his trail of errors by using a damaged window scraper to clear small areas from the frost-covered windows on his car. He tries to start his car and finds the battery is weak and won't start the car. He eventually gets the car started and then hits a trash container as he backs into the street. He approaches a stop sign at a slippery intersection and hits the brakes. But he slides through the intersection, narrowly missing a vehicle that had the right-of-way. Larry yells at the other vehicle and fails to notice a curve in the road ahead. He hits the brakes again and slides off the road into a field of snow, where he gets stuck. Frustrated, Larry decides to call for help but finds that his cell phone battery is dead.

## **Getting Prepared**

This section emphasizes the importance of preparing your vehicle before winter sets in. At a minimum, check the condition of tires, antifreeze and the battery. Get your vehicle tuned and have the oil changed. Make sure you have plenty of washer fluid and check the condition of the wipers.

## **Allow Extra Time**

In the wintertime, one thing that often changes is the amount of time needed to get where we are going. If roads are snow or ice covered, adjust your schedule to reflect the increased drive time.

## **Visibility**

During the winter, there are plenty of ways that visibility can be impaired while driving.

1. Snow, frost and ice can cover your vehicle while it sits outside. So be sure you have a good brush and scraper to clean off your vehicle. Make sure all the windows, lights and rear-view mirrors are cleared off. Also sweep snow from the hood and roof of the vehicle.
2. Improper use of the vehicle heater and defroster can also reduce visibility. For example, if warm air is directed toward the floor, or if the “re-circulate” button is engaged, the windows will soon fog up.
3. Road spray often contains salt that can build up on a windshield and can become a hazard, especially if washer fluid runs out. Be sure to keep a container of washer fluid in your vehicle and fill the washer fluid reservoir on a regular basis. Also clean headlights regularly, since salt spray can build up and reduce efficiency of the lights.
4. Be especially alert for the cloud of snow that can be thrown up by snowplows. If you’re following a snowplow, slow down and keep a safe distance. If you’re approaching a snowplow, turn on your wipers and lights, reduce your speed and be prepared to brake after you’ve passed through the cloud of snow.

## **Driving Techniques**

1. **Slow Down** - Probably the most important wintertime adjustment we should make is to drive more slowly. Whether we’re cornering, stopping, accelerating or driving on a straightaway, slowing down is the key.
2. **Intersections** - In winter intersections require extra caution because they get slippery from vehicles braking and accelerating. Look well ahead for intersections and give yourself extra time and distance to slow down.
3. **Cornering** - When you’re cornering, the weight of your vehicle tries to push it to the outside of the corner. If the road is snow or ice covered, traction quickly disappears. So during wintertime, slow down when cornering.

4. **Skid Control** - If the rear wheels are skidding, let up on the accelerator and turn your steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. If you have a manual transmission, disengage the clutch. Traction will return as the vehicle slows down. Try to limit the use of your brakes while you're skidding. Hitting the brakes can cause the wheels to lock up and make the skid worse.
5. **Acceleration** - Acceleration should be slow, smooth and steady. A sudden burst of power to the wheels can cause you to lose traction, fishtail or swerve. If you lose traction and the rear wheels starts to skid, don't panic. Whether you have front or rear-wheel drive, let up on the accelerator to reduce your speed, and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want to go.
6. **Passing** - Passing requires acceleration and turning at the same time. On a slippery road, that can be dangerous. If you must pass a vehicle, it's especially important to accelerate slowly and smoothly, and make your lane change gradually.
7. **On the Road** - Shaded areas, bridge decks and overpasses are potentially dangerous areas. Slippery conditions can linger in these areas when other sections of the road are clear and dry. Stay alert for these situations and slow down before you reach them.
8. **Braking** - It's important to know if your vehicle has standard brakes or anti-lock brakes, also called ABS brakes. The two types of brakes operate differently, especially on slippery roads. If you have standard brakes, apply smooth, gradual pressure to the brakes. If you feel the wheels start to lock, ease off the brakes until the wheels start turning again. Then apply the brakes gently. You want the wheels to slow down, not lock up and slide. ABS brakes, on the other hand, automatically prevent the wheels from locking up. When you feel a rapid vibration in the brake pedal, you've applied as much braking force as is safe for the road conditions. If you have ABS brakes, it's important not to pump your brakes.

## **Winter Survival**

1. If you happen to get stuck or stranded in a remote location during severe weather, it can be life threatening.
2. Monitor the weather conditions before you start a trip and check for storm warnings or travel advisories. If you must travel in poor conditions, let someone know your route and estimated arrival time.
3. Make sure you and all your passengers have clothes with them that are appropriate for winter conditions, including warm coats, hats, gloves and footwear.
4. It's good to carry a winter survival kit with the basic supplies, such as a shovel, emergency sign, blanket, flashlight, first aid kit, even candles with matches to light them, and high energy snacks. If you're stranded, a fully charged cell phone can help contact emergency help.

5. If there's no help nearby, stay with the vehicle. Use the vehicle's heater to keep warm but don't run the engine continuously. About ten minutes per hour is recommended, and keep a downwind window open slightly when you do, to avoid carbon monoxide.

### **Interview**

A woman tells the story of a winter driving crash she was involved in that resulted in a fatality.

### **Conclusion**

Wintertime challenges drivers with a variety of hazards...hazards that we experience at no other time of year...hazards that can take us by surprise if we aren't prepared.

But we can protect ourselves on the road if we prepare for winter driving, adjust to the conditions and remind ourselves that during the winter the rules for driving safely have changed.

## Preparing for and Conducting the Presentation

- ❑ Before presenting the video, review each section of this Leader's Guide and view the video before the presentation.
- ❑ Make sure the presentation area is quiet, has good lighting, unobstructed access and good climate control.
- ❑ Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program. If extension cords are to be used, secure them in such a way that they won't become a tripping hazard.
- ❑ Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- ❑ Make everyone aware of the importance your organization places on protecting employee's health and safety and how everyone must be an active member of the safety team.
- ❑ Explain that the primary purpose of *Winter Driving – When the Rules Change* is to do the following things:
  1. Remind viewers that winter driving conditions change nearly all of the rules about driving safely.
  2. Explain steps that should be taken to prepare our vehicles for winter.
  3. Review driving techniques that increase wintertime driving safety.
- ❑ Next, introduce the video and then play it without interruption.
- ❑ After the video is complete, you can tailor any discussion to your specific situations. You can refer to the Discussion Ideas section of this Guide for additional ideas. If you want to review the content of the program with participants you can refer to the **Program Outline** in this **Guide**.
- ❑ After the discussion, give a copy of the review questions included in this **Guide** to each participant and ask them to complete the questions.
- ❑ Maintain copies of an attendance record and each participant's quiz as written documentation of the training performed.

## **Discussion Ideas**

In addition to discussion topics you may have planned, the following questions may be used to encourage discussions related to winter driving.

1. Does anyone have any stories about wintertime vehicle?
2. What do you think are some of the most common wintertime driving mistakes?
3. Can you think of any other wintertime driving techniques that increase driving safety?
4. What do you think are some of the most dangerous wintertime driving hazards?

**WINTER DRIVING:  
When the Rules Change  
REVIEW QUIZ**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The following questions are provided to check how well you understand the information presented during this program.*

1. Why should the re-circulate setting on a car's heating and cooling system be avoided during winter?
  - a. it causes excess drain on your battery
  - b. it is designed to be used with air conditioning
  - c. it can cause the windows to fog up
  
2. If you are passing a snow plow that is throwing up snow, you should stop on the shoulder of the road until it passes.
  - a. true
  - b. false
  
3. What should you do to regain control if your vehicle's rear wheels start to skid?
  - a. apply the brakes firmly
  - b. maintain your speed and put the vehicle in low gear
  - c. let up on the accelerator and steer in the direction you want to go
  
4. When passing other vehicles on slippery roads, it's safest to accelerate and pass as quickly as possible to minimize passing time.
  - a. true
  - b. false
  
5. If you have ABS (anti-lock) brakes, it's important not to pump your brakes on slippery surfaces.
  - a. true
  - b. false
  
6. What ingredient in road spray can build up on the windshield and cause a hazard.
  - a. sand
  - b. salt
  - c. cat litter
  
7. What is the safest thing to do if you become stranded in a remote area during a winter storm?
  - a. stay with the vehicle and run the engine and heater about 10 minutes every hour
  - b. leave the vehicle immediately to get help
  - c. run the engine and heat continuously

**WINTER DRIVING:**  
*When the Rules Change*  
**ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. c

2. b

3. c

4. b

5. a

6. b

7. a