

# TRUCK TALK

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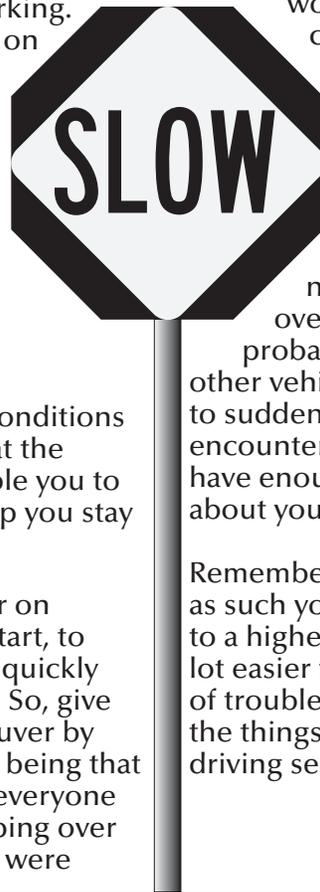
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## Winter Driving

Winter is the most difficult driving season. Not only do you have snow and ice to contend with, but there are also fewer hours of daylight, cold temperatures, wind, and a motoring public that are not trained professionals, like you are, with whom you must share the road.

Due to the importance of a driver being on heightened awareness during inclement weather, it is a good idea to put out a few reminders of how to avoid trouble during the winter driving season.

- Do your pre-trip inspection! Not just a cursory walk-around the truck to make sure all the tires are there and most of the lights are working. Those lights are what the other people on the road see as you travel down the road. Make sure they are all working and are free of dirt and grime.
- Make sure your tires have plenty of tread and are inflated properly. It's the tires that create friction with the road, which enables you to start, turn, and stop. If they are not up to the job, you are asking for trouble.
- Check the weather forecast and road conditions before starting your trip. Knowing what the conditions are down the road will enable you to do a better job of trip planning and help you stay out of trouble.
- SLOW DOWN. Everything takes longer on snowy or icy roads. It takes longer to start, to turn, and to stop – nothing happens as quickly on snow or ice as it does on dry roads. So, give yourself time to think, react, and maneuver by slowing down. Don't even think about being that driver out there who is going 60 while everyone else is going 40. Witnesses will be tripping over each other to tell the trooper what you were



doing 5 or 10 miles back as the trooper investigates why your truck is in the ditch. It would be interesting to see what type of severity weighting scores those violations will have in the Unsafe Driving BASIC in CSA 2010.

- Carry an emergency winter survival kit with you during this time of the year. Just imagine that you are in the middle of Nebraska, its 10 degrees outside, the wind is blowing 40 mph, the snow is flying sideways, and an engine belt breaks.
- The most common vehicle deficiencies during the winter include weak batteries, damaged or worn wiper blades, low washer fluid, clogged air and fuel filters, and low anti-freeze levels. Be aware of these items and check them frequently. As Yogi Berra said, "you can observe a lot just by looking".
- When you see a snowplow up ahead, that is the time to start slowing down, not when you are actually in a position to overtake the snowplow. Be aware they are probably traveling slower than you and the other vehicles on the road. Also, they may need to suddenly stop or take evasive action if they encounter an obstacle in their path. They already have enough trouble without having to worry about you.

Remember, you are the professional out there, and as such you are expected, rightfully so, to be held to a higher standard. As the old adage goes, "it is a lot easier to stay out of trouble than it is to get out of trouble". So, take the steps necessary to control the things you can control during this difficult driving season, and stay out of trouble.

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