

Definitions

Black ice is a thin, hard-to-see layer of ice on a paved road. (SGI, *Winter driving*)

Why Winter Driving Is a Workplace Hazard

Snow and ice reduce traction and increase stopping distance. Blowing snow and frost limit visibility. A vehicle breakdown can expose a worker to extreme cold.

Check conditions before and during travel.

Legislation

The Traffic Safety Act requires a speed safe for conditions, a reasonable following distance, headlights in poor visibility and a clear view ahead and to both sides. It also restricts handheld devices.

For work alone or in isolation, *Saskatchewan OHS Regulations, 2020, s. 3-24* requires risks to be reduced and an effective communication system. Emergency supplies may be a control.

Common Winter Driving Hazards

Low traction – ice, packed snow, slush and changing road surfaces.

Poor visibility – blowing snow, fog, darkness and snow-covered glass or lights.

Longer stops – slippery intersections, hills and heavy traffic.

Cold exposure – a vehicle breakdown or collision on a remote road.

Where Is the Greatest Risk?

Watch for ice on bridges, curves and intersections, and for drifting snow.

Check the Highway Hotline and forecast before travel. Postpone or change the trip when travel is not recommended.

To Effectively Control the Risk

- Plan the route, allow extra time and tell a contact your destination and expected arrival. Follow the company working-alone procedure when applicable.
- Inspect tires, lights, wipers, washer fluid, brakes and fuel level.
- Carry a charged phone and a winter emergency kit with warm clothing, a blanket, shovel and warning devices.
- Clear all snow and ice from windows, mirrors, lights and the roof. Keep the exhaust pipe clear before running the engine.
- Slow down, increase following distance and make gentle steering, acceleration and braking movements. Give intersections and large vehicles extra room.
- Turn on headlights when visibility is reduced.
- Do not use cruise control on icy or slippery roads; avoid distractions and never use a handheld phone while driving.

- If visibility or traction becomes unsafe, stop in a safe place and update your contact. Resume only when conditions allow safe travel.



Emergency Situations

If stranded, contact emergency services when needed and notify your work contact of your location.

Stay with the vehicle unless it is unsafe; make it visible and conserve warmth. If running the engine for heat, keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow and open a window slightly.

Follow the site or company emergency plan. (CCOHS, *Driving – Winter*)

Before Starting Work, Ask:

- What do the Highway Hotline and forecast say for the entire route?
- Is the vehicle clear, inspected and equipped for a delay?
- Who knows my route and expected arrival time?
- Where can I safely stop if conditions worsen?

Key Reminder

SLOW DOWN, LEAVE ROOM AND BE WILLING TO DELAY THE TRIP.

Getting to the destination is less important than arriving safely. Reassess road conditions throughout the trip.

Discussion Questions

Which part of today's route is most likely to be icy or drifted?

What would make us postpone or stop this trip?

How will we communicate if someone is delayed or stranded?

Sources

[Government of Saskatchewan. *The Traffic Safety Act*, ss. 199\(3\), 225\(1\), 230\(1\), 241.1\(2\), 246\(1\).](#)

[Government of Saskatchewan. *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*, s. 3-24.](#)

[SGI. *Saskatchewan Driver's Handbook: Winter driving*.](#)

[CCOHS. *Driving – Winter*.](#)

[Government of Saskatchewan. *Highway Hotline*.](#)