

National Private Truck Council
Monthly Driver Safety Letter – December 2005

Winterizing Yourself for Safety

As we approach the holiday season, I would like to throw a few reminders out there in terms of keeping safe during one of the most “distracting” times of the year no matter how enjoyable it may be. It is easy to focus on what happens on the roads but how many of you think about your own personal safety? Are you as “winterized” as your truck? Here is what I mean:

- During the wintertime, icy running boards, steps, and trailer decks account for thousands of slip-and-fall accidents. While most are relatively minor, every year a few drivers are paralyzed for life from these incidents.
- Frostbite is another problem. Many frostbite injuries come from not wearing proper headgear and gloves when you are outside your truck, especially refueling or doing your pre/post-trip inspection. The right clothing is the key to staying healthy, uninjured, and behind the wheel.
- A good place to start self-winterizing is with your shoes. Make sure that you wear good quality footwear with oil-resistant soles and some ankle support. Save your cowboy boots for the summer. They can be particularly slippery in bad weather. You don't want get them all wet and salt stained anyway.
- Many falls are the result of twisting an ankle to the side when getting out of your truck. Good ankle support can minimize this problem. Three points of contact will almost guarantee a safe egress. Treat your boots with a quality water-sealing product and keep a good coat of polish on them to retain their waterproofing.
- Whenever you are outside in freezing weather, be sure to wear gloves, a hat (most body heat escapes through the scalp), and in really cold temperatures, make sure your ears are covered. Just in case, always carry a small heat pack.

Like the Boy Scouts say, “Be Prepared.” It could save you a lot of money, not to mention pain.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't say something about the increased hazards on the roads over the holidays. You've probably heard these hundreds of times - the increased traffic, particularly people driving hesitantly because of being unfamiliar with the area, everyone in a hurry, weather problems, extra stress, distractions everywhere, and more.

You can't let it get to you or you'll become one of the statistics. A recent NHTSA study puts increased crashes at Christmas time right up there between Thanksgiving and New Years. In fact, December 26th is the 6th highest day for speed-related crashes. So do your personal best to keep yourself safe.

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Now to reinforce the message, here is a bit of bad poetry from yours truly:

Twas the week before Christmas and all through the roads,
Many creatures were hurrying to lighten their loads.

The customer orders were processed with care,
In hopes that deliveries soon would be there.

All drivers, well-rested from sleeping inside,
Were ready to make their long winter's rides.

As good as they are and exceptionally skilled,
They all wear their safety belts to prevent being killed.

While I in my PJs, bunny slippers and stuff,
Am hoping the weather will not be too tough.

Now hear me exclaim before losing my grip,
HAPPY NEW YEAR to ALL and to ALL a SAFE TRIP!!

Best Wishes for a Safe Holiday Season & Be Ready. Be Buckled

Bob I

The "Safety Guy"

(If you have suggestions for future Safety Letters, please let your Supervisor know.)

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