

October 2015

# THE MONTHLY SCOOP

The DOT Doctor Newsletter

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## Let It Go

*Let it go! Let it go! The cold never bother me anyway (Lopez, 2013).* Only if that were true. With winter fast approaching, the USA has already experienced the season's **first** snowfall in Wyoming. The weatherman is predicting this to be one of the coldest winter on record. How have you prepared for the upcoming winter season? Do you have a Cold Winter Survival Kit in your vehicle? Don't get stuck in the cold!



## Cold Weather Survival Kit

- 1 gallon of water per person per day
- Jerky, Dry Meats, Nuts, Protein Bars (yes they are a source of protein!)
- Dried Fruits & Veggies (idea is to have a food supply for 3-5 days)
- Prepackaged foods, canned foods, dehydrated meal kits
- Mess kit, cooking device, can opener
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Blankets, sleeping bag
- Swiss army knife or multi-function tool
- Spare set of Warm Clothes, Jackets, Waterproof Gloves, Hats and Mittens
- Spare Set of Medicine
- Medical Kit
- Baby Wipes ( You would be surprise at the uses you can get out of them!)
- Personal hygiene items and toilet paper possibly a portable toilet
- Cash supply and a major credit card
- Flares, Jumper Cables, Ice Picks and Scrapers, Tools, Sewing Kit, Power Inverter and Cell Phone Chargers
- Emergency candles and waterproof matches
- Extra anti freeze and anti gels
- Spare fuel filter
- Chains – make sure you have enough and have the right size!
- Bungees
- Cam Lock T-handles
- Reflective vest
- Kneeling pad
- Entertainment: music, games or books

***“WINTER IS  
NOT A  
SEASON, IT’S  
AN  
OCCUPATION.”  
~SINCLAIR  
LEWIS***



## Frozen



Winter can be magical. The power of the cold can turn a liquid to a solid. Is your truck prepared? Have you winterized? Have you checked your antifreeze, your oils, and other fluids? Do you have de-icer in your window wiper fluids? Do you have your tire chains in the truck? Have you drained your air tanks and added air brake anti-freeze to your lines and tanks? If in the far north, did you cover your radiator? Park with your vehicle facing south when possible.

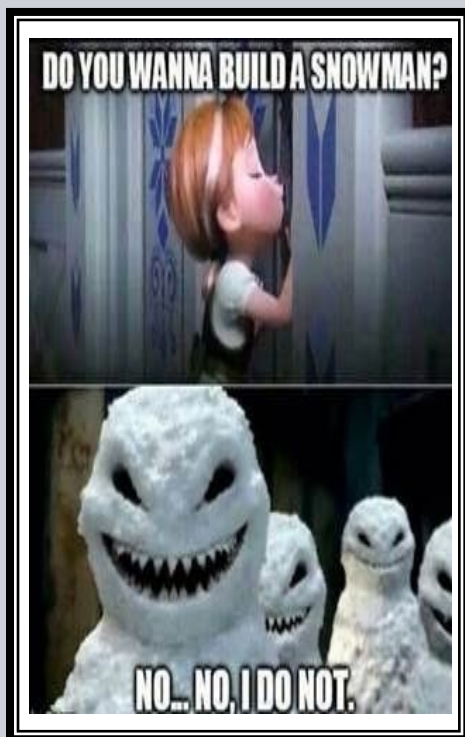
Remember the weather can change at any minute and the temperatures can drop leaving you with a frozen block of ice in you radiator. Good bye Engine; Hello cold!!!

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## Do You Want To Build A Snowman?

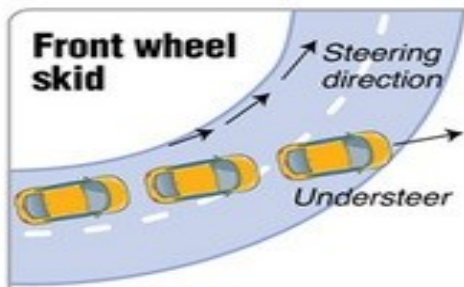
- ◆ Do you want to build a snowman? Remember even if you don't; children do! Watch the roads for children playing with the snow and having snowball fights. They are probably not paying attention to cars, trucks or traffic. Instead they are more worried about defending their snow fort.
- ◆ With the change of the seasons, animals are looking for shelter from the harsh weather. Make sure with your Pre-trip to check your tires for stray animals. Sad to say with the hard times we are going through anymore also check for young children, toddlers or smaller shape people hiding in the wheels for warmth from the hard winds of the winter.
- ◆ The changing of the weather and seasons means that food becomes scares for animals in the wild. Be on the look out! You never know when animals are going to dash in front of the truck chasing their prey.



## Driving in snow and ice

*If you must drive in winter weather, make sure your car is prepared with snow tires and that you know how to handle road conditions:*

- Decrease speed and leave plenty of room to stop
- Brake gently to avoid skidding; if wheels start to lock up, ease off brake
- Keep lights, windshield clean
- Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills
- Be particularly careful on bridges, overpasses, infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first

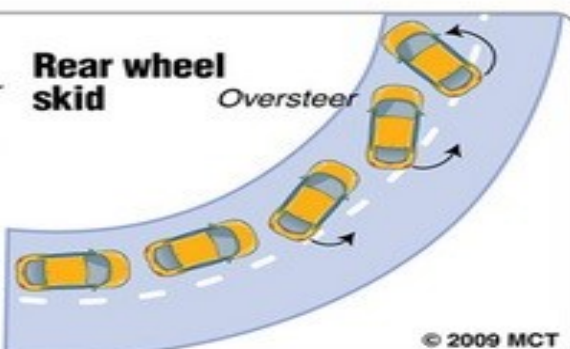


### Get the grip back

- Turn steering wheel farther to counteract understeer and re-establish adhesion
- Or: Simultaneously remove foot from brake or accelerator pedal, fully depress clutch, straighten steering; vehicle should regain traction

### Get the grip back

- Remove foot from accelerator or brake and depress clutch; then steer in direction that the back of the vehicle is sliding (steer into the skid)
- Beware of correcting the steering too much as this may cause the vehicle to slide back in the opposite direction



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Source: U.S. National Safety Council, Graham Sykes U.K. Graphic: Jutta Scheibe, Bro-Jorgensen

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## SAFTEY TIPS FOR DRIVING IN WINTER



- Before starting, remove any ice and snow from the windshield, window mirrors, hand holds, steps, deck plates, and also radiator shatters.
- Make sure the cooling system is full and there is enough antifreeze in the system to protect against freezing.
- Make sure the defrosters and heaters are working and that you know how to operate them.
- Drain your air lines and add air line anti freeze into the lines.
- Keep your tanks full to decrease condensation. Use Howes or another good anti gel. Carry spare anti gel and a fuel filter with wrench.
- Make sure the windshield wiper blades are in good working condition and can sweep off the snow properly. Make sure the windshield washers work. Use water antifreeze to prevent freezing of the washer liquid.
- Make sure you have enough tread on your tires. It is especially important in winter conditions. The drive tires must provide tractions to push the rig over wet pavement and though snow. Lug tires work best!
- You may find yourself in conditions where you cannot drive without chains. Carry the right number of tire chains and extra cross-links that fit your drive tires. Make sure they are in good condition and you know how to put them on.
- Make sure the lights and reflectors are clean and working properly.
- Start gently and slowly. When first starting, get the feel of the road. Do not rush!
- Drive slowly and smoothly . Keep a steady speed. If the road is very slippery, you should not drive at all. Stop at the first safe place.
- Make turns as gently as possible. Do not brake any harder than necessary, and do not use the engine brake or speed retarder. They can cause the driving wheels to skid on slippery surfaces. Do not engage the cruise control.
- Be Aware that as the temperatures rises to the point where ice begins to melt, the road becomes even more slippery. Slow down more.
- Avoid driving through deep puddles or flowing water if possible. If not, you should slow down, place transmission in low gear, and gently put on the brakes while driving though water. When out of the water, maintain light pressure on the brakes for a short distances to heat them up and dry them out. Make a test stop when it is safe to do so.

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## TOP QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH:

**Q: How do I gain traction after I am empty especially if I am unloading product from a tanker?**

**A:** Tanker drivers are at the greatest risk when unloading. You pull or back into a location. Your wheels are hot from driving. While you sit there unloading, you melt the snow and ice under your vehicle and sink.

A little preplanning goes a long way. Before pulling into the final unloading point, stop just short. Place some kitty litter or similar substance on the ground where your wheels will rest. Pull or back into location. Do not pull your trailer brakes but only set your tractor brakes. (Go tip for when parking at night as well.) You may wish to carry a wheel chock or block for added safety. This will help to prevent freezing as the snow melts. The kitty litter will create traction for you when you exit.

Taking these 2 simple steps when preparing to unloading in an uncleared area, will save you hours of digging or a tow bill.



I don't know of any truck driving jobs that are worth giving your life for. If you put your rig, trailer and load in the ditch; chances are, you'll find yourself standing alone without support from anyone. The finger will be pointed at you. Don't expect anyone to step forward and say they had insisted on a scheduled delivery appointment. 'Just on time' drivers and bad winter weather, just don't mix. Do what you need to, in order to stay safe. Use Common Sense and remember SAFETY ALWAYS RULES.

**Q: Do I really have to drain my air tanks every day?**

**A:** When the temperature is below 40F/7C it is a best practice to take a minute during your post trip and drain the air tanks. If this is the first time you have done so, make sure you drain them until all the "junk" has exited the lines. You will have to wait for the air to build back up in your tanks when you start your next shift but that is easily accomplished while you are performing your pre-trip.

A good preventive measure is to fill your lines with air brake anti-freeze at the beginning of the season. This will also melt ice already in the lines. Do not use alcohol. It will damage the seals.

Test your air brake knowledge: <http://www.truckercountry.com/cdl-practice-tests/air-brakes/classic/ab1/>

**Remember only a qualified mechanic may perform brake adjustments.**

**Q: I heard there is a law saying I have to clean the snow off the top of my truck or pay a fine of over \$1000. Is this true?**

**A:** Snow removal laws are set by the state. CT, NY, NJ and PA are known for having some of the strictest of these laws. Fines can exceed \$1000 per occurrence. Snow removal stations are said to be available in these states. NJ has stated that they will not access a fine on a driver that is heading to a station.

This is a tough one. If you wake up in a truck stop or rest area and it snowed overnight, what do you do? There is no way you can climb up on top of a dry van and clean off the snow. A truck wash will ice your vehicle causing other issues. You are in catch 22 unless there is a snow removal station at your "sleep" location. Terminals in these states need to have a provision in place to clean the trucks prior to them leaving the yard. In the name of safety; all yards should have a means of cleaning snow and ice from the vehicles prior to them entering the highway. Drivers must always clear all windows and mirrors prior to driving.





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= WINTER



## CHAIN LAWS

[Chain Law Guide](#) -This guide is organized by state with laws, contact information and other relevant information. A link of where to purchase chains in each state is also included. Remember: chain laws begin in Sept and run through May in some states.



The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) announced that its 2015 Operation Safe Driver Week would be during October 18 through October 24. During that week, law enforcement agencies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico will increase traffic safety enforcement and offer safety education programs, with the goal of increasing commercial and non-commercial vehicle traffic safety awareness.

The event, which was initially launched in 2007, is sponsored by CVSA, in partnership with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). It was created to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries resulting from crashes involving trucks, buses, and cars.

During last year's event, 59,080 commercial vehicle drivers and non-commercial vehicle drivers were cited for unsafe driving behaviors. The top five warnings or citations for commercial vehicle drivers were:

1. Speeding
2. Failure to use a safety belt
3. Failure to obey traffic control devices
4. Improper lane change
5. Following too closely

The top five warnings or citations for non-commercial vehicle drivers were:

1. Speeding
2. Failure to use a safety belt
3. Failure to obey a traffic control device
4. Possession/use/under the influence of alcohol
5. Improper lane change

Prepare your drivers and yourself. Ask us about our Driver Awareness Training. Available in 3 formats: instructor lead (.ppt), in-house professional trainer and in our office training sessions. Protect the CSA scores! Investment begins at \$250.