

## Mentor Session Toolbox Talk - Winter Precautions.



### Overview

With the leaves falling and the nights are drawing in, we're reminded that autumn has arrived and winter is just around the corner. Seasonal changes can present new risks - recent winters have been particularly harsh, with widespread snow and ice bringing parts of the country to a standstill.

Colder weather and shorter daylight hours mean there is more potential for accidents to happen and as such our risk assessment processes should include addressing seasonal and climatic conditions.

In preparation for the cold weather returning, now is an ideal time to prepare to deal with and think about seasonal changes.

Note to Team Leaders - Information for the group is in black, Questions/group tasks are in blue, and answers are in red.

### Part 1 - Commuting to and From Work.

#### **Preparing your vehicle for winter driving**

Hazards exist before we get to work, at work, and on our way home. Keeping your vehicle well maintained is important all year round, but doubly so in winter. For example, worn tyres won't hold the road in wet conditions as well as those with a good, deep tread.

**Q: What is the legal tyre tread depth?. When did you each last check their tyres?**

**A: The legal minimum tyre tread depths in the U.K are 1.6mm. Check yours are legal.**

We will see the shortest periods of daylight in the UK over the next 6 weeks so now is an ideal time to make sure all high visibility PPE and clothing is clean and REFLECTIVE and can be seen. It's an idea to have reflective PPE in your car in case you breakdown. BE SAFE BE SEEN. Also as we approach the winter months it is advisable to put together a Breakdown Kit.

**Q. What would you suggest goes in a breakdown kit to be kept in the car?.**

**Suggestions: Warning triangle, replacement bulbs, torch, reflective coat or vest, gloves, hat, blankets, snow grips, snow shovel, car mobile phone charger.**



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## Top Tips for Driving in the following conditions.

**In Snow & Ice** - Allow extra time to slow down and stop / Use a higher gear to avoid wheel spin / Don't lock your wheels while braking, select a low gear, allow your speed to drop, use the brake gently / If you start to skid ease off the accelerator gently

**In Fog** - Use dipped headlights / Only use fog lights when visibility is very poor / Don't fix on the tail lights of the vehicle in front - you may end up driving too close / Don't speed up suddenly as the fog clears. Fog can be patchy and you can find yourself back in thick fog unexpectedly

**In Rain** - Stopping distances dramatically increase on wet surfaces. / Keep well back from the vehicle in front for improved visibility / Unresponsive steering means your tyres are struggling to grip the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually

**Some issues that Essar have to deal with over the winter months.**



**Title of the photograph: When winterization goes wrong**

The UK has experienced several periods of unprecedented cold weather in recent winters. January 2010 saw very cold weather and snow disruption in many parts of the UK, and the extreme low temperatures experienced in 2010/2011 winter broke all records in some areas. This was made worse by the fact that the cold weather persisted for many days. On occasions, for example, the temperatures in some parts of the UK remained consistently below zero, and there were several consecutive night-time temperatures of -15 Celsius. Localised temperatures even lower than this were recorded in some parts of the country.

Companies will be well aware this can result in extensive business disruption from lost production and inability to move raw materials or finished product by road. However, such extreme weather can also increase the chances of losses of containment and major accidents as low temperature can have severe effects on plant and pipework, equipment and process fluids.

All companies should already have 'winterisation' procedures prepared, but the experience of recent winter temperatures has highlighted the need for these to be reviewed to ensure they are as robust as possible and appropriate for the sort of low temperatures and snowfall that sites may have to contend with.



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**Things to consider when working outside or onsite in phase 3. (to be issued to phase 2 groups only)**

- **Wear layered clothing.** Wearing multiple layers of clothing allows the worker to adjust their protection based on current temperature. Take off layers as you get too warm and put them on as it gets colder.
- **Take extra clothes.** Bring a change of clothes in case you get wet. Dry clothing always help keep workers warm, especially when working outdoors.
- **Take a break.** During extremely cold or windy weather, take regular breaks to warm up before continuing work. If possible, take shelter indoors from time to time, to warm up that body. If it gets extremely cold, stop working immediately and get inside to warm up. Do not risk your life for a job.
- **Drink up.** Even though it's cold out, keep hydrated by drinking water or other warm drinks. You will still sweat when working, even in cold temperatures. Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- **Take shelter.** In windy conditions and if the workspace allows it, set up a shelter to block the wind. This will help alleviate some of the difficulties of working in the cold.
- **Know the signs.** Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia. Get inside if you begin to experience them. If you see a co-worker showing symptoms, take them inside immediately.
- **Anti-slip shoes.** To avoid slipping on ice, wear winter boots with a strong tread. Spread grit or rock salt on the ice to provide a rough surface for footwear to grip.
- **Clear the path.** Shovel pathways where employees, clients and/or the general public will be walking.
- **Heat ventilation.** If using a non-electric heater to heat a shelter, ensure the shelter is ventilated to let gases like carbon monoxide escape. Or, use a heater where the heat generator can be placed outside while the heated air is pumped into the shelter.
- **Drive safely.** When driving in winter, ensure your vehicle's fluids are topped up. Be aware that the road can become icy, so drive slower and pay attention to changing conditions.