

Winter driving presents significant challenges for drivers across Canada and the northern United States. Snowstorms, icy road surfaces, and sub-zero temperatures cause additional hazardous conditions. In Manitoba, temperatures frequently drop below -30°C, and visibility can deteriorate rapidly due to blowing snow or sudden changes in weather. Winter driving requires extra precautions to respond effectively to rapidly changing road and weather conditions.



## HAZARDS

- Slippery Roads (Ice, Snow, Slush):
  - o Reduced traction, making it harder to stop, start, and steer (skidding or loss of control).
  - o Black ice is invisible and is commonly found on bridges, shaded areas, and intersections.
- Reduced Visibility:
  - o Blowing snow and vehicle exhaust clouds.
  - o Frosted or foggy windows.
  - o Snow-covered vehicles.
- Winter Infrastructure:
  - o Snowbanks and narrowed lanes
  - o Snow-covered obstructions
- Mechanical Failures:
  - o Cold weather affects batteries, brakes, and fluids.
- Stranded During Storms:
  - o Remote routes may have limited access to help or services.
  - o Limited/no heat source.
- Fatigue and Stress:
  - o Longer travel times and poor conditions increase fatigue.

## DID YOU KNOW?

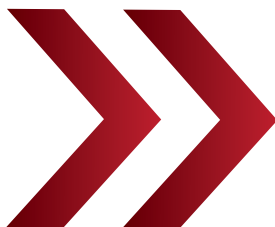
Ice at -1°C is twice as slippery as ice at -18°C, and stopping distances can be up to 10 times longer on icy roads.

## CONTROLS



- Prepare Your Vehicle
  - o Check tire pressure and tread depth (use winter tires, if applicable).
  - o Collect and inspect your tire chains.
  - o Inspect brakes, lights, wipers, and fluid levels.
  - o Use winter-grade windshield washer fluid.
  - o Keep fuel tanks topped up to avoid condensation and freezing.
  - o Treat diesel with anti-gel additives in extreme cold.
  - o Keep mirrors and windows/windshield clean and clear to maintain visibility.
  - o Remove accumulated snow from the truck and trailer.
    - » Helps you see better and prevents snow from sliding onto your windshield or onto other cars while you drive.
- Winter Emergency Kit
  - o Warm clothing, gloves, hat and blankets.
  - o Non-perishable food and water.
  - o Flashlight, batteries and phone charger.
  - o Shovel, traction aids (chains where permitted, sand/kitty litter).
  - o First aid kit.
- Stay Informed
  - o Use Manitoba 511 and other local services for real-time road conditions.
    - » DO NOT travel on closed highways!
  - o If visibility is poor or roads are unsafe, find a safe place to park and wait.
    - » Report dangerous conditions to help protect other drivers.
  - o Communicate with dispatch and other drivers about hazards.

*(continued)*



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- o If stranded, stay in the vehicle.
  - » Do not leave unless help is very close and it is safe to walk.
  - » Run the vehicle’s engine occasionally to provide heat and to conserve fuel.
  - » Ensure that the tail exhaust pipe is clear of snow.
- Adapt Driving
  - o Slow down!
  - o Increase following distance.
  - o Avoid sudden braking or sharp turns.
  - o Avoid passing other vehicles when conditions are poor.
  - o Never use cruise control on slippery roads.

#### SAFETY TIP:

Cruise control can cause your truck to accelerate or maintain speed when traction is lost, increasing the risk of skidding or jackknifing. In winter, you need full control to respond quickly to changing road conditions.

#### LEGISLATION

Canada: BC is the only province which has detailed tire chain rules.

- In British Columbia, Commercial vehicles (outside Greater Vancouver/Greater Victoria) must carry chains or other approved traction devices from October 1 to April 30 (with some routes earlier to March 31)



Manitoba’s Ice Roads:

- On ice roads for vehicles with Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) over 7,000 kg, a speed limit of 15km/h cannot be exceeded.
  - o must maintain 1 km spacing when travelling in the same direction
- On land-based winter roads: speed limit for heavy vehicles is 40 km/h maximum

US Tire Chain Regulations: Tire chain laws vary by state in the US. Not all states have regulations regarding tire chains.

- Colorado: Commercial vehicles on certain highways must carry sufficient chains from Sept 1 through May 31
  - o Two chain-law levels:
    - » Level 1: Single-drive axle combinations must chain all four

drive wheels; other commercial vehicles must have snow tires or chains

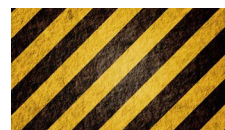
- » Level 2: All commercial vehicles must chain up; single-axle and tandem drive axle combinations must chain four drive wheels

- Oregon: Commercial vehicles must carry chains when road signs indicate “chains required”
- Utah: On designated highways, from Oct 1 to Apr 30 (or when posted by DOT), commercial vehicles with four or more drive wheels must affix chains to at least four of the drive-wheel tires
- Wyoming: A “two-level” restriction system. Under Level 2 (extreme conditions), commercial vehicles must have chains on at least two of the drive wheels at opposite ends of the same drive axle
- California: Chains are required when chain-control signs are posted (R-1/R-2/R-3 system). Although not always a fixed seasonal requirement, commercial vehicles must comply when the sign says

#### PREVENTION

Winter driving is part of the job—but it doesn’t have to be dangerous. With the right preparation, awareness, and decision-making, you can protect yourself and others on the road. Whether you’re navigating city streets or hauling across provinces and borders, your safety starts with smart choices.

#### NEED MORE INFORMATION? RPM CAN HELP!



#### [Hazard Identification & Risk Control](#)

Recognizing what could injure workers on the job is the first step to ensuring that they stay safe. This course will provide students with the practical knowledge necessary to identify, assess and control the hazardous elements of their workplace so they can do their part in preventing dangerous incidents.



#### [Emergency 1st Aid: CPR: Level C & AED](#)

This first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course provides the skills needed to recognize and respond to cardiovascular emergencies and choking for Adults, Children and Infants. This course, is provided by RPM Safety and is suitable for workplace requirements.



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