

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

December 2025

Winter driving

This is no time to slip up!

5 days, 4,600+ vehicle inspections

HOS might get more flexible

Is there a regulation for tire chains in
the winter?

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



J. J. Keller
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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

8 steps to a successful driver training program

Whether you're designing a new driver training program or fine-tuning one that's already established, there's always room to make meaningful improvements. This model can help you build a program from scratch or enhance an existing one.

1. Identify training needs. Identify the specific challenges, concerns, or misconceptions your drivers are facing. Problems that are best addressed through training include a lack of knowledge on a subject and improper or unsafe performance of a skill or task.

2. Get management and supervisory support. Training programs can take drivers off the road, potentially costing both the driver and company money. Justify the training program with management by:

- Outlining the reasons for conducting the training,
- Explaining the program's objectives and expected benefits, and
- Describing how you'll document the effectiveness of the training.

3. Set goals. Instructional goals help you define what you want to accomplish and measure the effectiveness of your training.

4. Prepare. Planning ahead allows you to focus on the session. It also sets an example as to the prep and organization expected of your drivers.

5. Deliver the training. Start by explaining the goals and objectives of the training and providing an overview of the topic. Explain the material in sufficient detail, making sure the presentation relates to your drivers' goals, interests, and experience. At the conclusion of the session, make sure you summarize the session's objectives and key points.

6. Document. Documentation offers evidence that you provided training on a topic to specific individuals within your organization. It provides evidence that you're striving for safe and compliant drivers.

7. Evaluate effectiveness. Evaluation helps you determine if your training program is meeting its goals. Evaluate training by reviewing post-training quizzes, observing your drivers as they work, reviewing accident and incident reports, and asking supervisors if training-based performance has improved.

8. Make improvements to the program. There's always room for making your training program even better. Use your evaluations to make changes and improvements when necessary. ♦



Lucero Truszkowski

Lucero Truszkowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She holds a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — WINTER DRIVING

Time to prep for ice, snow, and slippery roads

Being prepared for extreme cold, snow, and ice can make all the difference when it comes to safe winter travel. Well-known tips, like slowing down and understanding how to control a truck on slippery roads, are essential, but there are other, less obvious steps drivers can take, too.

Vehicle readiness

Before drivers even head out onto slippery roads or snowy conditions, they need to make sure their vehicles are ready for anything. Important steps to take include ensuring:

- The heater and defroster are working properly;
- All exhaust system connections are secure (a loose connection could cause carbon monoxide to leak into the vehicle);
- The cooling system is full and there is enough antifreeze (preferably an antifreeze good to -25°F);
- The battery is fully charged and the cables are firmly connected/not corroded;
- All lights are working properly and clear of snow, ice, and dirt; and
- Wiper blades press against the windshield hard enough to wipe it clean, with plenty of cold-weather washer fluid in the reservoir.

TIP: Distribute and review any policies your company may have that address this issue, including inspection policies.

Driving tips

Rapidly changing weather and road conditions pose several challenges during the winter months. The following are a few guidelines drivers should follow when on the road during hazardous winter weather:

- Check on road conditions before beginning the day, and then throughout the day.
- Turn the vehicle's low beam headlights on to increase visibility.
- Slow down. Speed limits are based on dry pavement and good weather conditions, not adverse winter weather conditions:
 - On a wet surface, reduce vehicle speed by at least one-fourth.
 - On packed snow, reduce vehicle speed by at least one-half.
 - On ice, reduce vehicle speed by at least two-thirds.

- Allow for additional following distance. It takes longer to brake safely on a snow-covered and/or ice-covered road.
- Don't use cruise control. Even a short tap on the brakes to deactivate the cruise control feature can cause a loss of vehicle control.
- If it's too dangerous to continue, pull off in a safe area (truck stop, rest stop, etc.) until conditions improve and it's safe to continue.

Tire chains

In certain areas of the country, tire chains are required on commercial motor vehicles when operating in adverse winter weather conditions. To be prepared, the driver should:

- Carry the proper size and number of chains and extra links in the vehicle;
- Regularly check the chains for broken hooks, worn or broken links, or bent or broken side chains;
- Know how to safely put chains on the tires; and
- Not wait until the last minute to put the chains on the tires. The driver should pull over in a safe and level area, preferably a designated chainup area. The driver should also wear reflective clothing to remain visible to other drivers.

Chains should be snug, but not too tight. They should be regularly checked and re-tightened when needed.

TIP: Tire chain requirements vary from state to state. Review the specific requirements for the state(s) in which your drivers travel.

Snowplow safety

Because they remove snow and apply sand, salt, or other road treatment, snowplows travel at a slower rate of speed than other vehicles. All drivers should maintain a safe following distance of at least 5–6 car lengths behind a snowplow. This will help in avoiding collisions as well as potential vehicle damage from the materials being thrown on the road.

If the driver must pass the snowplow, the driver should do it in a safe and legal passing area that's clear of snow and ice. Also, drivers should make sure there's enough clearance to the side, as plows are wider than most vehicles and portions of the plow and blade may not be visible due to blowing snow. ♦



TRAINING HANDOUT — WINTER DRIVING

Stay safe if stranded

On the off chance you become stranded in your vehicle due to wintry conditions, remember these tips to stay safe:

- Stay in the vehicle — walking in a storm is dangerous
- Call 911 to summon help
- Keep your vehicle's flashers on
- Put on more layers of clothing (wool socks, hat, gloves)



- Before running the engine for heat, ensure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow and crack a window
- Run your vehicle for about 10 minutes every hour
- Conserve food and water/stay hydrated
- Move your arms and legs around to keep your blood circulating ♦

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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — WINTER DRIVING

1. For proper vehicle readiness, lights should be free of:
 - A. Snow
 - B. Dirt
 - C. Ice
 - D. All of the above

2. When driving on packed snow, drivers should reduce vehicle speed by at least:
 - A. One-fourth
 - B. One-half
 - C. Two-thirds
 - D. None of the above

3. It's best to use the vehicle's cruise control when driving in hazardous winter weather.
 - A. True
 - B. False

4. If stranded due to wintry conditions, one good step is to:
 - A. Put on more layers of clothing
 - B. Walk to the nearest rest stop
 - C. Stand outside the vehicle and wait for someone to drive by
 - D. Eat all the food before it freezes

5. Tire chains are required across the entire U.S. during the winter months.
 - A. True
 - B. False ♦

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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5 days, more than 4,600 vehicle inspections

This year's annual unannounced 5-day hazardous materials/dangerous goods (HM/DG) inspection and enforcement blitz took place from June 9–13, 2025, resulting in 4,629 inspections. The Commercial



Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspection event involves having specially trained officers inspect commercial motor vehicles transporting HM/DG for regulatory compliance and placing decals on vehicles without any critical vehicle/cargo tank violations.

For the 2025 inspection, 831 CVSA decals were placed on vehicles, indicating no critical violations. Conversely, inspectors identified 1,169 HM/DG violations, with 51 percent of those (598) having out-of-service violations. These vehicles were banned from further travel until corrected.

HM/DG Road Blitz goals

The goals of CVSA's unannounced annual HM/DG Road Blitz include:

- Inspecting vehicles transporting HM/DG for regulatory compliance and identifying compliance violations;
- Removing vehicles with HM/DG out-of-service violations;
- Attaching a decal to vehicles/vehicle combinations without critical inspection violations;
- Recognizing compliant drivers, carriers, shippers, etc.; and
- Highlighting the importance of the programs associated with safe HM/DG transportation, as well

as the specially trained inspectors who focus on HM/DG safety and compliance.

Road Blitz results

During this year's 5-day inspection event, inspectors discovered:

- 16 undeclared packages in the U.S.,
- 35 U.S. drivers with missing copies of their Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) registration,
- 70 U.S. drivers without emergency response information in the vehicle,
- 32 Canadian emergency response assistance violations,
- 61 Canadian Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) training certification violations (64 percent of which placed drivers out of service), and
- Out-of-service violations in both countries for loading and securement and package integrity (leaking packages).

What makes HM/DG different

Transporting HM/DG requires drivers to undergo serious training thanks to heightened compliance requirements that keep carriers, drivers, the environment, and the public safe. Inspectors look for leaking materials or unsecured cargo, as well as verify packing and loading, labeling, placarding, marking, and shipping paper compliance.

In the U.S., HM refers to any "substance or material that poses an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce." HM is also designated as hazardous under Section 5103 of Federal Hazardous Material Transportation Law. In the U.S., carriers and drivers involved with transporting HM comply with the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR), while those in Canada follow the TDG Regulations. ♦

HOS regulations might be getting a little more flexible

In support of National Truck Driver Appreciation Week, two new hours-of-service (HOS) pilot programs were announced to improve the lives of truck drivers. These programs were created to increase flexibility and to make drivers' jobs safer and easier to accomplish.

The programs include:

- The **Split Duty Period** pilot program, and

- The **Flexible Sleeper Berth** pilot program.

What you need to know about the new HOS programs

The **Split Duty Period pilot program** will allow drivers to pause the 14-hour driving window for no less than 30 minutes and no more than 3 hours. This allows drivers to choose to extend the 14-hour window by taking one

off-duty, sleeper berth, or on-duty/non-driving period within that time limit.

The **Flexible Sleeper Berth pilot program** will add more sleeper berth split options beyond the current 8/2 and 7/3 options (e.g., splitting the 10-hour-off-duty requirement into 6/4 and 5/5 splits). This would allow temporary regulatory relief from the regulation requiring one period of at least 7 consecutive hours in the sleeper berth.

FMCSA data collection

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) plans to study these two programs to see how they may increase flexibility in current hours-of-service (HOS) regulations.

For the first program, the FMCSA will collect data and determine whether the added flexibility has an impact on safety outcomes.

For the second program, the FMCSA will test the safety of splitting up off-duty time and explore how it may impact driver fatigue and other safety performance indicators.

Stay tuned for future updates on how these pilot programs may impact your operations. ♦



Next Month's Topic: Slips, trips, and falls

As well as being painful and potentially embarrassing, a slip, trip, or fall can be costly for both the driver and the motor carrier. Something as simple as missing a step or walking across a wet warehouse floor can cause an accident. These accidents can mean a loss in working hours and income for the driver and a loss in productivity and profit for the motor carrier. ♦

Expert Help: Questions of the Month

Question: Where in the regulations does it state that the address on the driver's license must be the same as the driver's current address?

Answer: Section 383.23 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) states that a driver's commercial driver's license (CDL) must be issued by the driver's state or jurisdiction of domicile.

State of domicile is defined in Sec 383.5 as the: "State where a person has his/her true, fixed, and permanent home and principal residence and to which he/she has the intention of returning whenever he/she is absent."

Once the individual's "state of domicile" has been established, that's the state from which the driver's license must be issued. Section 383.153 addresses the information that must be included on a CDL or commercial learner's permit (CLP).

Per Section 383.153(a)(2), the CDL or CLP must include: "The full name, signature, and mailing or residential address in the licensing State of the person to whom such license is issued."

Question: Is there a general rule or regulation for which tires need to be chained during the winter season?

Answer: The FMCSRs don't address tire chains, leaving it to the states to regulate and enforce. Most states have a section or statute that's very general, stating that tire chains of a reasonable size may be used when required for safety.

There are some states that are more in-depth when it comes to this issue, including CA, CO, NV, OR, and WA. ♦

Expert Help

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ISSN 2688-1616

GST R123-317687

(75800)



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