

Today's Topic/Issue

Winter weather can introduce additional hazards in the workplace, from cold temperatures and poor visibility to ice, snow, heavy rain and strong winds. Planning and responding to changing conditions can help keep people safe, protect equipment and minimise disruption during the colder months.

Winter Driving:

Driving will always present a risk but during the winter months these risks are amplified.

QUICK QUIZ

What additional risks are present during winter driving?

We can reduce these risks by carrying out additional checks before setting off:

WINTER DRIVING CHECKS

BEFORE YOU SET OFF, CHECK:



BRAKES

Check that your brakes are working properly and respond effectively.



LIGHTS

Check all lights are working, including headlights, brake lights, indicators and fog lights.



TYRE TREAD AND PRESSURE

Check tread depth for good grip and ensure tyres are at the correct pressure (including the spare if you have one).



OIL LEVELS

Check the engine oil level and top up if needed.



WINDSCREEN WIPERS AND SCREENWASH

Check wiper blades are in good condition and top up windscreen wash with a suitable winter screenwash.



FULLY STOCKED EMERGENCY BOX

Make sure you have an emergency box, including items such as a high-visibility vest, warning triangle, torch, warm clothing, blanket, ice scraper and any other essentials for winter conditions.



Slips, Trips and Falls:

- Wet and icy conditions increase the risk of a slip or trip incident occurring
- Wear footwear appropriate to the weather
- If you see ice or water building up in pedestrian areas on site, inform your line manager so that walkways can be kept clear or pedestrians diverted
- Be aware that metal scaffolding, ladders and other footholds are especially hazardous in wet or icy conditions

Manual Handling:

- Ensure that you are wearing water resistant clothing or have it to hand should the weather become wet
- Keep yourself warm so that your muscles are prepared for manual handling work. Muscles that are not warmed up are more likely to become injured

COLD STRESS AND HYPOTHERMIA

KNOW THE SIGNS. TAKE ACTION. STAY SAFE.



UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

Working in cold conditions can affect your body and concentration. Prolonged exposure to low temperatures can lead to cold stress and, in more serious cases, hypothermia.



SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shivering
- Feeling cold, tired or weak
- Numbness in fingers and toes
- Loss of dexterity
- Pale or cold skin
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- Slurred speech (later stages)



WHO IS AT GREATER RISK?

- People working outdoors or in unheated areas
- Prolonged exposure to cold
- Working in wet or windy conditions
- People with certain medical conditions
- New or inexperienced workers
- Anyone who is fatigued, unwell or dehydrated



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Wear suitable warm, waterproof clothing and PPE.
- Keep clothing dry.
- Take regular warm-up breaks in a suitable area.
- Stay active where possible.
- Eat and drink to maintain energy.
- Be aware of the conditions and how long you are exposed for.
- Report if you feel too cold or unwell.



TAKE ACTION

If you notice the signs of cold stress or hypothermia in yourself or a colleague, tell your supervisor, seek a warm place and get medical assistance if symptoms are severe.



Toolbox Talk – SUPERVISORS NOTES

Winter Weather

2026/27

Supervisors have an important role in keeping people safe when winter weather affects the workplace. Conditions can change quickly, so supervisors should consider the weather, the workplace, the people carrying out the work and whether planned activities remain safe and suitable. This means identifying changing hazards, putting appropriate controls in place, communicating any changes to employees and being prepared to adapt or postpone work when conditions become unsafe.

QUICK QUIZ

What additional risks are present during winter driving?

- Snow, Sleet, Rain, Ice and Freezing fog make driving difficult.
- Conditions such as Rain and Snow increase braking distances by up to 2 or 4 times respectively
- Darker conditions during peak times increases the risk of an incident
- The sun is lower in the sky during winter months so is more likely to 'Dazzle'
- Cars need more maintenance to tyres, windscreens and anti-freeze levels during the winter months
- The nights drawing in and the mornings often starting in the dark can be mentally draining particularly for sufferers of SADs. Combat this by getting as much sunlight as you can, taking Vitamin D supplement pills and maintaining positive mental health practices.

Emergency Box

- Warm Clothing • De-Icer • Jump Leads • Warning Triangle • Torch
- First Aid Kit • Fully charged Mobile Phone



Toolbox Talk – SUPERVISORS NOTES

Winter Working

2026/27

What should supervisors consider during winter?

1. Check the conditions before work starts

Supervisors should consider the day's weather and how it could affect the workplace and planned activities.

2. Check the workplace

Winter conditions can create hazards that weren't present the day before. Where problems are identified, they should be sorted where possible or reported and controlled until they can be dealt with.

3. Consider the people doing the work

Not everyone will be affected by winter conditions in the same way. Supervisors should also encourage employees to speak up if they're struggling with the conditions.

4. Make sure everyone has what they need to work safely

Supervisors should check that employees have access to appropriate:

- Warm and weather-resistant clothing
- Footwear
- PPE
- Lighting
- Warm-up areas
- Welfare facilities
- Drinking water
- Emergency arrangements

PPE should remain suitable for the task — adding layers or gloves shouldn't inadvertently introduce another hazard.



Toolbox Talk - Attendance Sheet

Site/Department Name:

Trainer Name:

Signature:

Toolbox Talk Topic:

Date:

Name	Signature

Any further feedback or questions from attendees regarding this toolbox talk topic?