

Pinnacle Pointers for Safety Group Programs

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 12 DEC. 2015

PINNACOL
ASSURANCE

Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article – Dec. 2015
Contact: Mindy Carrothers (303.361.4790, mindy.carrothers@pinnacle.com)

Revisiting Winter Driving Risk Management

Winter driving affects every employee in your organization. Whether you manage a fleet of vehicles, oversee a mobile sales force or employ commuters, you can greatly reduce the risks your employees and their families face by helping them learn and use best practices for driving during the snowy months ahead.

Winter is the most hazardous season on the roads, accounting for 24 percent of weather-related car accidents, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. And with the National Safety Council reporting an average total cost per motor vehicle accident claim of more than \$65,000, the human and financial toll on employers is significant.

Winter Driving Risk Management

Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, you can promote safe driving by ensuring your workers know the hazards of driving on snow- or ice-covered roads, properly train to drive in winter conditions and carry licenses for the vehicles they operate. For information about driving safely during the winter, visit OSHA's [Safe Winter Driving](#) page.

Employers should set and enforce driver safety policies. Also, now's the time to beef up your maintenance program for the company vehicles and mechanized equipment operated by your workers. Learn more at: [Motor Vehicle Safety](#) (OSHA Safety and Health Topic's Page).

Vehicle Systems Working Properly?

Employers should ensure that trained workers inspect the following systems to make sure company vehicles (and private vehicles used for company business) perform properly during the winter season:

- **Brakes:** Brakes should provide even and balanced braking. Also check the brake fluid level.
- **Cooling System:** Ensure a proper mixture of 50/50 antifreeze and water in the cooling system at the proper level.
- **Electrical System:** Check the ignition system and make sure that the battery is fully charged and that the connections are clean. Check that the alternator belt is in good condition, with proper tension.
- **Engine:** Inspect all engine systems.
- **Exhaust System:** Check exhaust for leaks and ensure all clamps and hangers are snug.
- **Tires:** Check for proper tread depth and for signs of damage or uneven wear. Ensure tires are properly inflated.

- *Oil:* Check the oil level, and change the oil and oil filter if necessary.
- *Visibility Systems:* Inspect all exterior lights, defrosters (windshield and rear window) and wipers. Install winter windshield wipers.

Outfit Vehicles with Emergency Essentials

Vehicles should be outfitted with emergency kits that include the following items:

- Cellphone or two-way radio
- Windshield ice scraper
- Extra windshield wiper fluid
- Snow brush
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Shovel
- Tow chain
- Traction aids (bag of sand or granular cat litter)
- Emergency flares
- Jumper cables
- Snacks
- Water
- Road maps
- Blankets, change of warm clothes

Pinnacol Resources

For more information on shoring up winter driving safety at your organization, visit the [Resources](#) web page at Pinnacol.com. Additional resources are available on the website pages of the [Occupational Safety & Health Administration](#), [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) and [National Safety Council](#). Or call Pinnacol's Safety On Call hotline at 303-361-4700 or 888-501-4752. Our safety services team stands ready to answer questions and help keep your workforce safe behind the wheel this winter.

###