

# Winter Driving Tips for Commercial Vehicles



As a business owner with commercial vehicles, you strive to ensure your drivers' safety on the road. While your company's vehicles are likely well-prepared for the clear roads and blue skies of summer, they might not be ready to tackle winter's heavy snowfalls, icy streets, and decreased visibility.

To help you prepare for cold weather conditions, we're listing our top five safety tips to help keep your fleet secure and reduce your liability exposure.

## 1. Change Vehicle Fluids

The first step of winterizing any commercial vehicle is a full examination of its fluid levels. Ideally, a professional mechanic should perform this check-up.

Three fluids need to be monitored during this step for their amount and consistency:

- **Coolant:** For companies with vehicles in colder climates, it's important to add the proper mixture of antifreeze to your coolant, which helps to prevent your radiator from freezing in winter.

- **Engine Oil:** If your vehicles run on thick oil, you may want to consider replacing it with a thinner one in winter. 5W-30 oil has better viscosity in winter than 20W-50, so many mechanics and automobile manufacturers recommend this substitution in colder months.
- **Windshield Wiper Fluid:** Switch to freeze-resistant wiper fluid when the temperatures start falling. In cold weather, you need your vehicles' windshields free of ice crystals, snow, and streaks to avoid hampering your drivers' vision and preparedness.

## **2. Examine Vehicle Batteries**

Ever noticed how your cellphone's battery struggles to hold a charge in cold weather? A battery can also experience reduced capacity in winter. To help ensure your battery stays well-charged, perform a full examination of the battery and its cables, fluid, and terminals. If a battery is more than three years old or shows significant signs of wear and tear, consider replacement before a driver gets stranded in the cold.

## **3. Switch to Winter-Ready Tires**

Safe wintertime driving depends on the health of your tires. If the tires in your commercial auto fleet are worn or low in air pressure, your vehicles could experience reduced traction on slippery streets, leading to greater risk of skidding or spinning out. In cities with high levels of snowfall, snow tires are a must. These specialized tires are designed to grip snowy terrain, decrease slippage, and increase the driver's ability to control their vehicle. Additionally, always use wipers, defrosters and headlights to improve visibility.

## **4. Equip Drivers with Cold Weather Emergency Kits**

During chilly months, staying safe means always preparing for the worst. If a vehicle stalls during its journey, or experiences a traffic accident, it's essential that the driver has access to an emergency kit. This kit should contain winter-specific supplies to keep them warm and fed. In certain situations, the provisions should help your employee return to the road or call for help. These safety items could include: a bag of sand, a shovel, an ice scraper brush, a flashlight, a battery- or solar-powered radio, snacks, water, and warm blankets, gloves, and a hat.

## **5. Double-Check Your Commercial Auto Insurance Policy**

Finally, to keep your fleet fully protected, touch base with an AmTrust appointed agent about your [commercial auto insurance policy](#). In the event of a wintertime accident, it's important that your business's fleet has the comprehensive coverage it needs. Talk with an agent today to ensure your company's vehicles are ready for this season's slippery, treacherous roads.

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