



HGV safety – Driving on snow and ice – Jan 2015 update

Here's some advice for driving in snow and icy conditions > from the Freight transport Association.

This applies to both forest and highway driving (mostly common sense!)

- Obtain road condition updates from site operatives or the Forest Works Manager to ensure the forest site is in a safe condition to access.
- Ensure you have all the site safety information with you – location maps / hazard maps Emergency contact numbers
- Obtain weather information before you set off and keep up to date with changing conditions and closed routes via the radio or by regularly calling into base (you can also see traffic alerts and weather alerts)
- In snowy or freezing conditions, carry in the cab: a shovel; a couple of strong sacks (to put under the drive wheels if the vehicle becomes stuck); warm clothes and a blanket; a torch, food and a warm drink in a flask; a road atlas; a mobile phone and charger; and sunglasses (the glare from snow can be dazzling)
- Ensure the whole of your vehicle (especially your windscreen and mirrors) is cleared of ice and snow before attempting to move off
- Lower your speed and keep a good distance from other vehicles – allow ten times the normal stopping distances on icy roads
- Allow for the fact other drivers may get into difficulties
- All braking must be gentle and over much longer distances, especially when driving articulated vehicles or those with a trailer attached
- Avoid any sudden braking, steering or acceleration
- Falling snow can reduce visibility dramatically, use dipped headlights and reduce your speed
- Road markings and traffic signs can be obscured by snow. Take extra care at junctions

- In prolonged periods of snow, the fixing of snow chains or snow socks to driven wheels can prove to be of value
- Don't attempt to overtake a snow plough or vehicle spreading salt, unless you are sure the road is clear and the conditions allow it to be done safely
- When driving at night, be alert for a drop in temperature. If the steering feels light, you may be driving on ice, so ease your speed as soon as it is safe to do so
- If your vehicle becomes stuck in deep snow, engage the diff-lock (if one is fitted) to regain forward traction – but remember to switch it off as soon as the vehicle is moving and before attempting a turn.
- Alternatively, use the highest gear you can to improve traction. Then try alternating between reverse and the forward gear until forward motion is possible.
- Avoid continual revving in a low gear, which could lead to the drive wheel digging a deeper rut
- When operating independent retarders, take care when going downhill in snow. The retarders could cause the rear wheels to lock, although some retarders are managed by ABS to help avoid this problem
- Take extra care when getting in and out of the truck in the forest and – assess underfoot conditions !
- Metalwork will be icy – review and always have 3 points of contact when climbing onto timber cranes and trailers !

NS 21/1/15