INTER-LINK SERVICES INC.

"The Driving Force Behind Success"

2010/11 WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Once again, the time of year is upon us when the weather starts to change and produces a variety of new challenges for drivers on the roadways. I know it may seem early but some bad weather has already demonstrated what lies ahead. Hopefully this refresher will help to avoid accidents caused by being caught unaware of the changes that happen so rapidly at this time of year.

POOR TRACTION

To maintain your grip, start off slow and easy. Do not spin your wheels. In deep snow, try turning your wheels from side to side to push the show away. Before you turn off the ignition, move your wheels back and fourth 1-2 meters (4-5 feet). This packs the heavier snow for easier starts. When you are pulling out, use a light foot on the accelerator, easing forward gently.

Vehicles stuck at an intersection on a hill or at an entrance create aggravating delays, major traffic tie-ups and even accidents.

REDUCED ABILITY TO STOP

It takes 3 – 12 times the distance to stop on ice and snow-covered roads than on dry roads.

Tests indicate that the heavier the vehicle, the greater the stopping distance. The simple answer is to leave a greater following distance between you and the vehicle in front. Gearing down of the truck (do not use the jake brake) also assists is bringing the unit to a safe stop. The recommended safe following distance under ideal conditions is 1 second for every 10 feet of vehicle length. For example, for an 53 foot tractor-trailer combination following distance is 6 seconds. Under winter conditions, widen this gap accordingly. The more severe the conditions, the wider the gap should be.

STARTING AND STOPPING

Braking on ice is never easy, but as the temperature rises, ice becomes even more slippery. For example, your braking distance can double with a variation from 0 to -18 degrees Celsius. It is important when driving in winter weather to check the feel of the road when you start out and at regular intervals during your trip.

SLIPPERY SURFACES

The action of tires spinning and sliding on snow and ice polishes the surface. This greatly decreases traction on already hazardous road surfaces. It happens most often at intersections, on curves and on hills. The slippery road surface increases braking distances, slows traffic and presents a severe hazard at intersections. To compensate, slow down early when you approach a slippery intersection, curve or hill. Adjust to the existing road, weather, and traffic conditions. Gearing down may also be necessary to slow down safely.

BLACK ICE

Ice sometimes becomes disguised. The road ahead may appear to be black and shiny asphalt. Be suspicious – it may be covered in a thin layer of ice called black ice. Generally in the winter, asphalt is a grey or white colour. If you see a black surface ahead, slow down, brake smoothly and gently, proceed with caution.

REDUCED ABILITY TO SEE AND BE SEEN

Before starting your trip, clean the entire windshield and all of the windows. In winter weather, it is even more important to have full visibility of the road and the surrounding traffic. Wipe off the headlights , stop lights, tail lights, and signals so that others can easily see you. This may be necessary frequently during a heavy storm. The extra few minutes may very well save your life or that of another.

Road splatter can leave you blind. Use your windshield washer often. Washer fluid contains methyl alcohol, which prevents freezing in the reservoir under the hood. On the windshield, it has a different effect – the antifreeze power is weakened and the evaporation chills the remaining fluid rapidly. Air rushing by your vehicle further speeds the evaporation. To prevent windshield freeze-up, be sure to use an antifreeze solution that is right for the average winter temperatures for your geographical area. Do not dilute antifreeze. Doing so fill weaken its' effectiveness. Before using the washer, prepare the windshield by heating it with the full power of the defroster. Run your heater and defroster for a few minutes before you start out. You will prevent a sudden fogging of your windshield.

At night, stop occasionally to clean off the headlights. In fog or heavy snowfall, keep lights on low beam and adjust your speed accordingly.

HAZARDS OF JACKKNIFING FOR TRACTOR-TRAILER COMBINATIONS

There are two distinct types of jackknifing situations :

1. A tractor jackknife in which the rear of the tractor skids sideways
2. A trailer jackknife in which the rear of the trailer comes around

FACTS ON JACKKNIFING

Repeated tests have shown that if a jackknife develops beyond 15 degrees, it is almost impossible to recover.

A jackknife can go to 15 degrees in one and a half seconds. You must react quickly to take preventative action and recover control of your vehicle. The faster this 15 degree angle develops, the greater the severity and potential damage of the jackknife.

HOW TO PREVENT JACKKNIFING

Safe defensive driving and adjusting to the conditions offer the best safeguard against jackknifing. Going over a hilltop at 60 km/hr to discover a sheet of ice or vehicles piled up invites tragedy. A little caution and alertness will prevent impending trouble. Allowing the truck to build up speed downhill before a turn or stop invites danger by having to over brake which could result in a skidding or jackknife situation.

DRIVING TECHNIQUES

There have been considerable differences of opinion on the subject of jackknifing and driver techniques. Findings have shown the most effective methods of maintaining control of a tractor-trailer are :

1. The most effective technique for recovery from a jackknife on ice is almost complete reliance on steering with little or no use of the accelerator or braking system
2. A prompt start in correcting a jackknife is paramount.
3. Experience and practice count. Drivers with the most experience have greater confidence and more control.

DIRECTIONAL CONTROL

Directional control is best achieved when all of the wheels are rolling. The tractor is most likely to jackknife when the drive wheels of the tractor are locked and the front and trailer wheels are rolling. When the trailer wheels are locked, a trailer jackknife can also develop. Brakes on an empty trailer still have the capacity necessary for a full load – very easy to over brake. When traveling empty, brake with extra caution.

OVERPOWERING OR SPINNING

Power should be applied cautiously. Spinning the drive wheels risks a jackknife. This can easily occur on icy upgrades and usually results in a tractor jackknife.

BRAKE BEFORE TURNING

Jackknifing often develops while braking for a curve. Do your braking and gearing down well before the turn. Get down to a safe and easy turning speed, then take the turn with all of the wheels rolling.

BRAKING WITH AN AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

If you experience skidding while braking with an automatic transmission after you release the brakes, it is because the transmission has to shift into a lower gear and can't achieve traction to spin the drive wheels. Shift the transmission into neutral to allow the wheels to move free (remove the power from the drive wheels).

Gentlemen, exercise caution this season.

All the best,

Inter-Link Management.