

ARE YOU WINTER READY?

On Sunday the clocks go back meaning longer nights, it also signals the beginning of winter time.

While we cannot forecast with any degree of certainty how bad winter 2013 will be, we do know it will mean worsening weather and poorer road and driving conditions.

However, now is the time to take simple and cost effective steps to protect your employees, other road users and your business.

Wrightway Underwriting Ltd recommends that you take these simple steps to reduce the risks involved in winter driving.

- Scheduled Maintenance – The commercial vehicle road worthiness act means that commercial vehicles must remain properly maintained and roadworthy over the course of the entire year and not just for test date. The road safety authority are undertaking site visits and have the power to issue prohibition notices so that your vehicle(s) will be parked up if found to be defective. Properly maintained vehicles save time and money
- Follow the link on www.wrightway.ie to the Road Safety Authority guide to keeping your vehicle roadworthy which includes a simple planner for tracking and scheduling routine maintenance. A well maintained vehicle is a safer vehicle.
- Do you or your drivers carry out daily walk around checks?
- The importance of identifying problems / defects with your vehicle(s) prior to setting out on a trip cannot be overstated. A simple issue such as a faulty bulb / no washer fluid / defective or dangerous tyres rectified before going on the road can help avoid downtime through expensive emergency repairs away from home and help avoid accidents.
- Follow the links on www.wrightway.ie to the Road Safety Authority Website which includes a poster with key points & a handy Daily checklist for you and your drivers to carry out prior to leaving your yard. Make one person responsible for rectifying these defects in line with best practice
- Having a Bad Weather driving policy in place and being properly prepared for poor weather and driving conditions can considerably reduce the chances of an accident occurring. For example in the event of snow / ice drivers should have a pre-planned route utilising national primary routes and motorways where possible and avoiding secondary and local roads. Even when these minor roads may be quicker they are less likely to be treated by local authorities / NRA and therefore represent a more hazardous driving environment.

FOR MORE RISK MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & ADVICE VISIT WWW.WRIGHTWAY.IE

LOADING & UNLOADING IN POOR WEATHER

It's not just driving conditions which deteriorate in Winter, not every driver is lucky enough to reverse onto a parking bay and enjoy a break while the vehicle is loaded by a forklift via a loading bay.

Many vehicles including tippers, flats, euroliners, and curtainsiders require a lot of involvement on the part of the driver when loading / unloading.

For example when loading via the sides or roof of a trailer and opening the curtains, the floor of the truck / trailer can become very wet.

Slips, trips and falls are a major hazard.

Forklifts or teleporters outside in poor light and weather conditions and with the driver's visibility potentially obscured by freight on the forks means he may not see where the driver is standing as he approaches the trailer.

A few simple risk management measures can substantially reduce the risk involved in this potentially hazardous environment.

Has the driver appropriate personal protective equipment for the task at hand including:

- Safety footwear with a suitable slip resistance to help prevent slipping
- Warm waterproof High Viz clothing so that the driver is visible
- Hard hat to protect from falling debris
- Suitable gloves to handle wet, cold and abrasive items

Has the task of loading and unloading been risk assessed and is there a safe working guideline or standard procedure for loading or unloading in order to reduce the risk of accidents?

This is a work place and there are obligations placed on you under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act which must be complied with.

Follow this link to [BeSmart](#) to the Health & Safety Authority for more information and access to the their free online risk assessment and safety statement tool.

For a selection of helpful driver checklists including a winter checklist follow this link [IRU Truck Driver Checklists](#) to the IRTU