



**KENTUCKY**  
AGC Self Insurers' Fund

## Driving During Cold Weather or Snow

Cold weather and winter storms create high-risk driving conditions, especially for those working in and around construction sites, quarries, and highway projects. Crews often operate heavy equipment, haul materials, and travel on rural or unimproved roads—sometimes before plows or salt trucks arrive. Preparing drivers and reinforcing smart winter driving practices can prevent crashes, injuries, and costly downtime.

### Understand the Risks

Cold temperatures, snow, sleet, and ice reduce tire traction and increase stopping distances. Bridges, overpasses, shaded areas, and haul roads can freeze first. Visibility may also be reduced by blowing snow, fog, or early-morning darkness common during winter operations. Larger and heavier vehicles require more time and distance to slow or stop, increasing risk if speeds are not adjusted.

### Prepare Before You Drive

Winter driving safety starts before the engine turns over:

- Inspect vehicles daily, with extra attention to tires, brakes, lights, wipers, and defrosters
- Ensure tires have proper tread depth and correct inflation for cold temperatures
- Keep fuel tanks at least half full to avoid condensation and fuel line freeze-up
- Stock vehicles with basic winter supplies: ice scraper, flashlight, reflective vest, blankets, and emergency contact information
- Allow extra warm-up time so defrosters and mirrors are clear before moving

### Adjust Driving Behavior

When roads are cold, wet, or snow-covered:

- Reduce speed well below posted limits and site-specific maximums
- Increase following distance—at least 8–10 seconds in slippery conditions
- Avoid sudden braking, acceleration, or sharp steering movements
- Brake early and gently; downshift when appropriate on grades
- Use headlights in snow or low visibility, even during daylight hours

### Be Alert on Work and Haul Roads

Temporary traffic patterns, uneven surfaces, and changing grades increase winter hazards on project sites and quarry roads.

Snow can hide ruts, drop-offs, and edge lines. Drivers should:

- Stay alert for equipment entering or crossing haul roads
- Watch for pedestrians wearing bulky winter clothing that may limit mobility
- Follow posted site rules and traffic control devices at all times

### Know When to Pause Operations

If conditions deteriorate to the point where safe driving is no longer possible, stopping is the right decision. Supervisors should empower drivers to slow down, pull over, or delay travel when weather conditions exceed safe limits.

### Key Takeaway

Winter driving demands patience, preparation, and constant awareness. Slowing down, maintaining equipment, and recognizing when conditions are unsafe protects drivers, coworkers, and the traveling public—while keeping projects moving safely through the cold weather season.