



SAFE DRIVING TIPS **ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Snow, ice, freezing rain, fog, flooding, sudden downpours, night, poor visibility . . .

Just a few of the adverse weather conditions we all face whenever we are driving. The National Safety Council reports that, in 2000, there were over 100,000 work-related disabling injuries due to vehicle accidents, nation-wide. Additionally, there were approximately 2,200 motor vehicle work-related fatalities during this same time period. These represent a cost of over \$14.8 *billions*. These costs include wage and productivity losses, medical expenses, administrative expenses, motor vehicle damage, and employer costs.

In terms of cost equivalents, these losses represent:

- Purchasing 42 gallons of gasoline for every registered vehicle in the US, or
- Almost \$77 per every licensed driver, or
- More than twice the combined profits reported by Ford and General Motors.

A summary of emergency vehicle crashes in the United States during 1999 indicates there were over 41,300 crashes. These include 5,050 ambulances, 6,839 fire trucks, and 29,419 police vehicles. However, only about 17,500, or 42.5%, of the total were during emergency use. This would indicate that emergency vehicle crashes during non-emergency driving conditions account for the remaining 57.5%.

When looking at the underlying causes of these vehicle crashes, the National Safety Council reports the leading single cause is: Driving too fast or at an unsafe speed.

What do you need to do to control or reduce the numbers of vehicle crashes in adverse weather?

- First and foremost, **slow down**.
- Maintain an adequate following distance. As the road surface becomes glazed with rain, snow, or ice, stopping distances increase greatly to over 10 times what you may expect on clear, dry pavement.
- Insure that tires are in good condition, properly inflated, and have adequate tread depth. A recent study by the National Center for Statistics & Analysis found that more than 25% of all passenger vehicles had at least one tire that was under inflated by 8 psi or more. A

tread depth gauge and tire pressure gauge are the two most useful tools available to insure proper tire condition.

- Complete a “vehicle pre-trip inspection”. A simple checklist can assist with this inspection. Lights, windshield wipers, turn signals, etc.
- Institute a preventive maintenance program and keep records of all vehicles.
- Finally, implement an effective “Fleet Safety Program”. Your Risk Management Services Loss Control Consultant is available to assist you in developing your program.

For additional information contact risk management services at **1- 800-228-0986** and select “**safety and risk control**” from the available options.

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