

SMART DRIVER[®]

March 2023

IT'S TIME TO DISCUSS SPRING DRIVING HAZARDS

Winter is nearly in the rear-view mirror, which means it is time to start thinking about spring and the unique driving hazards this season brings.

ADVERSE ROAD CONDITIONS

Potholes pose a significant risk to drivers and equipment. These hazards are created when melting snow and ice seep into the soil under the pavement. When the water freezes, it expands, causing the pavement to bend, crack and weaken. As the ice melts, the pavement contracts and leaves gaps or holes in the surface. If this continues, the pothole gets bigger. When a tire strikes a pothole and loses pressure through a slow leak or all at once due to a blowout, the result can be a loss of control crash and possibly a high-dollar loss.

BAD WEATHER

The spring months bring warmer temperatures and extreme weather systems, such as tornados, heavy rains, severe thunderstorms, flooding, and high winds. Be sure to monitor weather forecasts, communicate when bad weather is approaching, and either reroute away from these systems or find a place to safely pull over and wait the storm out.

CONGESTED TRAFFIC

Additional cars, motorcycles, pedestrians, and bicycles are on the road as the weather improves, and they create unique hazards for truck drivers. Likewise, slower-moving vehicles like farm equipment and holiday travelers are on the road more as well. If feasible, route away from congested areas – especially during peak rush hour times.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Road construction is inevitable, drivers should slow down below the posted speed limit in construction zones and maintain proper following distance. Workers and equipment may enter the roadway unexpectedly, so drivers should avoid distractions and stay focused on the road ahead.

DRIVERS ARE REMINDED TO ALWAYS UTILIZE THE ESSENTIAL 7 DRIVING TECHNIQUES:

1. **AVOID DISTRACTIONS** Distracted driving involves any activity (including illness and fatigue) that diverts your attention away from driving.
2. **OBSERVE PROPER SPEED FOR CONDITIONS** Adjust your speed based on the environment, such as traffic volume, snow, rain, road construction, etc.
3. **MAINTAIN PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE** Trucks need more distance to stop than passenger vehicles need. Creating more space between the truck and vehicles ahead gives you more time to perceive and react to hazards.
4. **BE ATTENTIVE TO THE ROAD AHEAD** Traffic ahead can slow or stop abruptly; or a hazard may present itself unexpectedly, like a deer running across the road, requiring you to react suddenly.
5. **REACT PROPERLY TO HAZARDS** Each hazard you encounter is unique, and the proper reaction can range from adjusting your speed and increasing following distance to pulling over until it is safe to continue driving.
6. **YIELD THE RIGHT OF WAY** Forcing your vehicle into another driver's lane, blocking oncoming traffic, or preventing merging traffic from entering are examples of failing to yield the right of way.
7. **MAINTAIN ONE LANE** Avoid frequent lane changes and stay in one lane as much as possible.



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Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: _____ Driver's Signature: _____

Emp/Unit#: _____ Date: _____ Witness Name: _____

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

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| 1. Adverse road conditions, bad weather, congested traffic and road construction are potential road hazards. | True | False |
| 2. Pre Trip inspections are NOT required in the Spring because the weather is usually mild. | True | False |
| 3. It's possible to develop a slow air leak in your tire after striking a pothole. | True | False |

Answers:
1. True
2. False
3. True



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