



## DECEMBER SAFETY TOOLBOX

# **MONTHLY SAFETY AWARENESS DISCUSSION GUIDE**

## ***Defensive Driving: Uncontrollable Factors***

### **Introductory Comments**

The leading cause of occupational fatalities is vehicle-related crashes. Defensive driving is driving to save lives, time, and money, despite the conditions around you and the actions of others. Defensive driving is the personal responsibility of everyone who operates or rides in a motor vehicle.

([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org))

### **Instructions:**

Use this Safety Toolbox Talk to spark discussion within the employee group. Test knowledge retention with the associated quiz.

### **Meeting Starter Questions**

- What is Defensive Driving?
- What are uncontrollable factors?
- How do I drive defensively?

### **Critical Safety Points**

Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by educating employees on how to recognize hazards of winter weather driving. For example, driving on snow/ice covered roads; are properly trained for driving in winter weather conditions; and are licensed (as applicable) for the vehicles they operate, as well as know how to drive defensively. ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov))

Defensive driving is driving against **controllable** and **uncontrollable** factors.

**Uncontrollable** factors may include :

- Visibility
- Weather
- Road conditions
- and other drivers

Winter weather driving requires awareness, understanding hazards, and safe execution of defensive measures. Over 1,300 people are killed and more than 116,800 people are injured in vehicle crashes on snowy, slushy, or icy pavement annually. Each year, nearly 900 people are killed and nearly 76,000 people are injured in vehicle crashes during snowfall or sleet. Winter road maintenance accounts for roughly 20 percent of state DOT maintenance budgets. State and local agencies spend more than 2.3 billion dollars

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## National Safety Council Collision Prevention Formula:

- **Recognize the hazard:** Scan around and behind your vehicle. Check mirrors every 3-5 seconds. Always stay alert.
- **Understand the defense:** Know how to prevent traffic hazards from becoming collisions. Know the consequences of your driving consequences. Know the basic defenses: scan all directions, slow down, use a safe following distance.
- **Act correctly in time:** React using the safest driving maneuver. Consider that other drivers may act in time, but they may act incorrectly.

([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org))

## Winter Weather Safe Driving Tips:

- **Reduce your speed:** You should reduce your speed by 1/3 on wet roads and by 1/2 or more on snow packed roads. ([www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov))
- **Trail at a safe distance:** It takes 3/4 of a second from the moment your brain sends the signal to your foot to move from the accelerator to when your foot actually applies the brake. In this short period of time, you may have already traveled 60 feet. ([www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov))
- **Properly use headlights and fog lights:** Visibility is crucial when the snow starts to fall. Brighter lights will help you see more clearly when it's dark outside. ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org))
- **Conduct pre-trip inspections:** Moreover, did you know that tires lose air pressure in the cold? Be sure that your tires are properly inflated, as tire pressure drops 1-2 psi for every 10 degrees in temperature fluctuation. ([www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov))
- **Learn how to recognize black ice:** If the pavement looks wet as you approach, even though the rest of the area is seemingly dry, it may be a patch of black ice. Always reduce your speed, and avoid ice patches as you're able. If needed, come to a complete stop while you wait for other cars to pass. ([www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov))

### Quiz Answer Key:

1. False. Reducing speed will ensure safe driving distance and reaction time.
2. False. Tire pressure decreases and can impact handling, blowout risks, and much more.
3. Your own behavior.
4. Recognize the hazard, understand the defense, act correctly in time.
5. False. Remove snow and icy from the roof as well to ensure it does not slide down impeding visibility.

**PREPARE** for the trip; **PROTECT** yourself; and **PREVENT** crashes on the road.

([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov))

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Employee Name:	Division:
Signature:	Instructor:
Date:	Score:

## ***Toolbox- Defensive Driving: Uncontrollable Factors***

**Question 1:** Reducing speed on icy roads will not impact safety.

- TRUE       FALSE

**Question 2:** Tire pressure is not negatively impacted by cold weather.

- TRUE       FALSE

**Question 3:** When driving, what can you control?

- Other drivers on the road       Law enforcement  
 Your passengers       Your own behavior

**Question 4:** What are the steps in the NSC Collision Prevention Formula? (select all that apply)

- Recognize the hazard       Act correctly in time.  
 Come to a complete stop       Understand the defense.

**Question 5:** You must only remove snow and ice from the windshield of the vehicle.

- TRUE       FALSE

