

# *Safety* **NEWSLETTER**



## **Cold Weather and Distracted Driving: Top 3 Safety Recommendations**

Cold weather conditions, such as icy roads, snowstorms, and fog, significantly increase the risks of accidents for drivers. Adding distractions into the mix only makes matters worse. To stay safe on the road during winter months, it's critical to prioritize both focus and preparation. Here are the top three recommendations for combatting distracted driving in cold weather conditions:

### **1. Eliminate All Distractions Before You Drive**

Cold weather demands your full attention on the road, so it's essential to eliminate potential distractions. Secure your phone in a designated holder or put it in silent mode before you start driving. If you need directions, program your GPS or map out your route beforehand. Adjust your mirrors, temperature controls, and radio before hitting the road. Remember, multitasking can cost you precious seconds on icy or snow-covered roads.

### **2. Drive Cautiously and Stay Prepared for Changing Conditions**

Cold weather can cause slippery roads and limited visibility, so defensive driving is key. Reduce your speed, increase following distance, and avoid sudden braking or sharp turns. Distractions like texting, eating, or adjusting controls while navigating these conditions can lead to devastating consequences.

### **3. Plan for Extra Time and Avoid Rushing**

Rushing to your destination during cold weather not only encourages distractions but also increases the chance of mistakes. Leave earlier than usual to avoid feeling stressed or rushed. This will allow you to stay calm and focused while navigating winter hazards, such as black ice or snow drifts.



## Protecting Yourself in Cold Weather: Top 3 Safety Recommendations

As temperatures drop, cold weather poses serious risks to county employees who work outdoors or in unheated environments such as warehouses. Protecting yourself from the elements is critical to ensure safety, maintain operations, and avoid weather-related injuries. Here are the top three recommendations to keep you safe in cold weather conditions:

### 1. Dress for the Weather

Wearing proper clothing is your first line of defense against the cold. Layering is essential—start with a moisture-wicking base layer to keep sweat off your skin, add an insulating middle layer like fleece or wool for warmth, and finish with a windproof and waterproof outer layer. Don't forget to wear insulated gloves, a hat, and thermal socks, as most body heat is lost through exposed areas. Use slip-resistant boots to prevent falls on icy surfaces.

### 2. Stay Hydrated and Take Warm-Up Breaks

Cold weather can dehydrate you just as much as hot weather, so drink water regularly. Avoid alcohol or caffeinated drinks as they can dehydrate you further. Schedule regular warm-up breaks indoors or in a heated vehicle, especially if temperatures drop below freezing. Prolonged exposure to the cold can lead to hypothermia or frostbite, so monitor how you're feeling throughout the day.

### 3. Know the Warning Signs of Cold Stress

Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of cold-related illnesses, such as hypothermia and frostbite. Early signs of hypothermia include shivering, confusion, and fatigue. Frostbite symptoms may include numbness or a pale, waxy appearance on the skin. If you notice these signs, seek warmth and medical attention immediately.

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