



The Importance of Safety in the Snow

While this season isn't the heaviest snowfall recorded, it has included several severe snow events which have blanketed the area with inches of snow at one time. WGN's Tom Skilling reported on January 13, 2019, that Chicago's 2018-2019 snow season was running 3-inches above the season-to-date normal of 13.9 inches, clocking in at nearly 17-inches of total accumulation. Although Punxsutawney Phil and the Farmer's Almanac predict the snow-season should be slowing by the end of February, it is important for snow fighting crews to remain diligent in proper safety practices for snow removal. In January, IRMA received approximately 30 claims related to incidents involving snow plows. It is never too late to train on the importance of snow plow operation safety. Review these tips for your next toolbox talk:

1. Review Snow Removal Routes

Following severe snow events, debrief on any challenges found with snow routes which will can reduce accidents. Discuss overhead obstructions and other potential hazards.

2. Conduct Pre/Post Trip Inspections

Equipment checklists should cover in detail machine function and should be reviewed by maintenance staff. Keep records on equipment history. Drivers should always perform a walk around to check mirrors and lights. Sample Checklist can be found in IRMA's Snow & Ice Control Plan Guideline, located [here](#), or use the [CDL Vehicle Inspection Memory Aid](#) as a guide.

3. Remain Diligent with Defensive Driving

- Aim High in Steering – hands at 2 and 10 to keep total control of the vehicle
- Keep Eyes Moving – keep scanning for changing conditions
- Don't Get Boxed In – leave an out while traveling & keep other drivers out of blind spots
- Keep Lights & Beacons On – be seen! Honk if necessary.
- Avoid Unnecessary Backing Maneuvers – Remember the dead space distance (80-90 ft) behind the truck that can't be seen when using mirrors. Don't rely on mirrors alone, turn your head and use spotters with hand signals in areas that require frequent backing maneuvers. GET OUT AND LOOK!

4. Safe Vehicle Entry

Use the 3-point contact method climbing into/exiting vehicle cabs.

5. Wear Seat Belts

Drivers in large vehicles are not protected from injury. Enforce seat belt usage.

For more information or other safety tips regarding snow plow safety, please contact IRMA's Risk Management Team or visit our website for additional training resources.

Additional Training Resources

[Video On-Demand](#)

- Snow Plow Safety
- Working Safely with Snowplows

[Video Streaming](#)

Winter Safety Playlist:

- Videos
 - Winter Driving
 - Safety Winter Driving
 - Cold Weather Safety
- Online Courses (HTML)
 - Safety Winter Driving
 - Winter Safety