# Road safety: winter edition

WSPS Consultant Dave Santi knows a thing or two about the perils of winter driving. He's been travelling on snow and ice-laden highways delivering training to firms in and around Sudbury for the past 30 years. Part of that training involves road safety.  
  
"People who drive for work and to work face the same winter risks," says Dave. Black ice, slippery surfaces, snowstorms, reduced visibility, and the bad habits of other drivers.  
  
Motor vehicle collisions on Ontario roads are the greatest single cause of worker fatalities, but Dave has tips to help you and your employees stay safe behind the wheel.

### Develop policies

Driver safety policies and procedures set out rules and expectations around responsible driving and include training, support, monitoring, and reporting. "If employees drive more than 500 km each year for work, encourage them to take a defensive driving course," says Dave

To keep all workers safe, implement an inclement weather policy for closing the facility in advance of severe weather.

### Create awareness

Anyone who drives can benefit from information and advice on how to stay safe on the road. Safety talks, newsletters, flyers, Intranet, lunch and learns are all great ways to raise awareness and help develop skills.

### Vehicle safety tips

* Regularly check defrosters/heaters, antifreeze levels, brakes and battery.
* Ensure lights and indicators are working.
* Invest in winter-specific wiper blades and carry extra windshield washer fluid.
* Check road and weather conditions before you head out.
* Completely clean the outside of your car before heading out; chunks of ice and snow can pose a hazard to you and others.
* Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent moisture in the fuel line.
* Carry winter survival gear including a blanket, first aid kit, food that won't spoil (granola bars), water, matches, extra clothing and boots, shovel, flashlight, flares, and booster cables.

### Share these driving tips

* Use snow tires.
* Slow down and adjust your speed for weather and road conditions.
* Allow more time to get to where you are going.
* Understand how your car reacts in winter. All wheel, front wheel, and rear wheel drive vehicles handle differently.
* Keep a safe distance from other cars.
* Stay alert. Be aware of vehicles all around you.
* Don't get distracted. Avoid talking on cell phones, reading, texting, grooming, eating and drinking. Also, pay close attention to other drivers who appear distracted.