**Safe Winter Driving**

**Culture Corner-Safe Winter Driving**

While work place safety is a year round priority, winter weather conditions like snow, ice and rain mean that we need to pay extra attention to safety hazards that put our workers at risk for injury. Even if you do not operate a vehicle as part of your job, driving to and from work puts you at risk for being in a collision or stranded. Whether you drive a company car or your own, safe winter driving reduces time lost from work, possible injury and ultimately saves time and money. The wellbeing of our employees is always a priority. Injuries to our employees can reduce

productivity and potentially increase workers’ compensation insurance-related costs and auto

insurance repair costs. By reducing the likelihood of worker injury due to winter driving

conditions, BBPL protects our most valuable asset—our employees.

Here are some basics to keep you safe when the roads aren’t during the remaining winter weeks.

 **Check**—Batteries weaken in cold. After three winters, yours might need replacing. Turn on the

headlights, then start the engine. If the lights brighten when the engine is running, your battery’s

weak. Make sure windshield washer fluid and engine antifreeze levels are full.

 **Be ready**—Winter gear should include battery jumper cables, snow brush/ice scraper, cat litter

or sand to put under wheels if you’re stuck, small shovel, flashlight and batteries, phone

charger, drinking water and snacks. Consider taking a container for bathroom use in case you

get stuck inside the car. Keep plenty of fuel in the tank in case you must run the engine to stay

warm if delayed. All-season tires handle light snow. Use snow tires or chains in heavy snow.

 **See**—Clean the inside and outside of the windshield and rear window. Defrost and deice the

windshield before you drive instead of hoping the defroster will handle it as you drive. Wipe

snow and slush off your headlights.

 **Be seen**—Keep your brake lights and turn signals as snow-free as possible. Use your

headlights in daytime to make your vehicle stand out from the drab winter background. Have

reflective triangles and/or a reflective vest to wear if you need to exit the car for help.

 **Go gently**—Trying to start too quickly, even with all-wheel drive or traction control, can leave

you stuck in place. Abruptly changing speeds, up or down, can cause the tires to slip and spin.

 **Stop properly**—Your car or truck probably has antilock brakes (ABS). They keep the wheels

from skidding under hard braking. That lets you keep steering while stopping. If you were taught

to pump the brakes, forget that with ABS. Safety folks preach, “Stomp, stay, steer.” Stomp,

hard, on the brake pedal. Stay on the pedal, hard, despite vibrations or kickback. Steer around

the danger instead of crashing into it. Not intuitive, perhaps, so practice at low speeds in an

empty parking lot or on a long driveway.

 **Avoid skid row—**If the back end of the car or truck begins to slide sideways on a slippery

surface, turn the steering wheel the same direction as the back end is moving. If it’s dancing out

to the left, turn the wheel to the left; if right, turn right. Otherwise you’ll turn the skid into a spin.

Antiskid control, common on most cars, helps, but it can’t prevent all slick-road skids.

 **Pack heat**—Blankets or small candles in containers can warm the inside of the car if you’re

stranded. If you use candles, open a window slightly because candles consume oxygen and

emit poisonous carbon dioxide. If you keep the engine running to stay warm, also open a

couple of windows a bit for fresh air in case there’s an exhaust-system leak, also poison, that

could seep into the car’s interior. www.aarp.org