

Winter Hazards

As we shift from warmer weather to colder temperatures, we need to be prepared for winter conditions and winter-related hazards. Whether driving on icy roads, being outside in the elements or working in the mountains, it is important to be aware of the various hazards that you may encounter. Additionally, being in mountainous terrain is often challenging as weather conditions can change quickly. Being prepared with the right equipment, training, and information is critical to your health and safety during winter conditions.



Remember:

- **Be Alert** to changing conditions throughout your work shift
- **Be Aware** of seasonal-specific tasks, such as shovelling snow, which can cause overexertion injuries
- **Be Flexible** and adjust your plans if conditions change
- **Be Prepared** for unexpected events such as power outages and vehicle breakdowns

Winter-related Hazards to Consider:

- **Slippery conditions** require good traction to prevent vehicle incidents and slips, trips and falls. Remember to switch to winter tires and use chains or other traction devices where needed and wear appropriate footwear.
- **Cold temperatures** bring a risk of hypothermia and frostbite. Ensure appropriate precautions such as limiting outdoor work, safe work procedures and frequent check-ins, and appropriate work clothing
- **Avalanche risks** can exist even for mines not in mountainous or avalanche-prone areas. An assessment with appropriate mitigation measures is required wherever avalanche risks exist
- **Low light conditions** can make some tasks like driving or operating equipment more difficult
- **Seasonal illnesses** Remember to use preventative measures such as washing your hands, staying home when you have symptoms of an illness, and following communicable disease plans at work
- **Mental health illnesses** such as depression, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and holiday stress are more common in winter months. Educate workers on the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, inform workers of available Employee Assistance Programs, and clarify sick leave policies

Resources:

- Shift Into Winter – Winter Driving Safety Information – www.shiftintowinter.ca
- Avalanche Canada – <https://www.avalanche.ca/>
- [Winter driving - WorkSafeBC.](#)
- [Cold stress - WorkSafeBC](#)