**TOOLBOX TALK - ‘*Winter Readiness’***

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| **Contributor:** **Emer Croston, HSE Advisor – Walls Construction Limited** |
| *A person wearing a hard hat  Description automatically generated with low confidence"As we head into the winter months, with darker mornings and shorter**daylight hours, we must ensure our site activities and operations are**planned and managed in a safe and controlled manner. ‘Winter**Readiness’ when driving is also very important. Focusing on the key**issues in the checklists below will help us maintain high standards of**safety, health, and welfare on our sites and when driving to and from work.”* *(*Emer Croston, HSE Advisor – Walls Construction Limited) |
| **Checklist for Site:** |
| 1. Check that adequate lighting is provided on-site, in the compound, and car park areas (if applicable to your site).
2. Ensure all lighting, temporary and permanent, is rated and tested.
3. Check that ground conditions where trip hazards may exist are levelled off and maintained in good order.
4. Keep adequate stocks of grit, salt, and other materials for maintaining good underfoot conditions for footpaths and roadways on site.
5. Ensure access routes in and out of the site are well signposted and illuminated.
6. Establish a regime for checking welfare facilities i.e., leaking taps, faulty lighting, windows and ventilation, heating, and materials storage.
7. Ensure water pipes are insulated to avoid freezing on cold nights.
8. Check that auxiliary devices (beacons, lights, mirrors, etc) on mobile plant are in good working order.
9. Ensure all personnel on site are wearing Personnel Protective Equipment and that it is in good condition, including reflective strips. **Visibility on site is paramount.**
10. Ensure ladders and scaffold walkways and roofs are inspected for frost or other damp conditions, as the risk of slips and falls increases at this time of year. Be mindful of how windy conditions may impact scaffold elevations.
11. Ensure all excavations, drainage works, etc. are barricaded off and highlighted with rigid barriers or stock blocks, flashing lights, etc.
12. Inspect excavations, particularly after extreme weather conditions.
13. Establish a rota for callouts over the Christmas and New Year holidays in the event of an emergency or an unplanned event on-site.
14. It is important to obtain up to date weather reports at this time of the year.
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| **Checklist for Driving:** |
| 1. **Check your tyres as they are your only contact with the road.** To give you the best protection in extreme conditions tyres should be at least the minimum legal thread depth of 1.6mm and the correct tyre pressure. Always obey warning lights on your dashboard pertaining to same.
2. **Service and winter check:** Make sure your vehicle has been serviced and is winter ready for the months ahead.
3. **Use your lights.** As we come into the winter months, motorists are advised to use dipped head lights during the day, so you are easily seen. Headlights and taillights should be in working order and regular checks are advised to ensure their functionality. Clean your headlights to ensure they are well illuminated.
4. **Understand your brakes.** Check your vehicle manual and find out if it has safety assist technology such as Electronic Stability Control (ESC) or Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS). Learn how these technologies can assist driving in harsh weather conditions.
5. **Safe Distance.** It takes longer to stop a car during winter weather conditions so slow down and allow extra distance between you and the car in front.
6. **Visibility is key, make sure you can see!** All too often motorists do not de-fog or de-ice windows and mirrors which can compromise visibility. This winter ensure windows and mirrors are fully clear before you move your vehicle and carry a de-icer and windscreen scraper. Do not use boiling water as this can crack the windscreen.
7. **Beware of “Black Ice”.** Black Ice is one of winter’s biggest hazards as it is difficult to see. Watch out for sheltered/ shaded areas on roads, under trees and near high walls.
8. **Be prepared.** During the winter months, it is advised that motorists carry the following essentials in the boot of their vehicle. The list non exhaustive.
	1. High visibility vest
	2. A hazard warning triangle
	3. Spare wheel
	4. Tow Rope
	5. De-icing equipment (for glass and door locks)
	6. First aid kit
	7. A working torch
	8. A car blanket, additional clothing and some food and water
9. **Breakdown.** In the event of a breakdown drivers need to ensure their vehicle is well in off the road so as not to obstruct other vehicles, and that their hazard warning lights are on.
10. **Keep up to date.** Listen to local weather and traffic reports and pay heed to the weather warnings alerting drivers of unsafe and dangerous driving conditions.

**SAFE DRIVING ALWAYS!** |
| **For Further Information:** |
| * [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)
* [www.emergencyplanning.ie](http://www.emergencyplanning.ie)
* [www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie)
* [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)
* [www.tii.ie](http://www.tii.ie)
* [www.theaa.ie](http://www.theaa.ie)
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