

Environment aware:

Weather and rural roads

Use this guide to help lead a discussion with employees to raise awareness about the hazards associated with different weather conditions on rural roads. Empower them with strategies to minimize risks and become safer drivers. Use the form on Page 2 to record meeting details.

Weather significantly influences rural driving hazards. In remote areas with potentially less infrastructure maintenance, drivers must recognize the impact of varying weather conditions. Adjusting driving techniques accordingly ensures safer travel.

- 1 Snow and ice:** Rural roads are often the last to be treated or plowed during icy or snowy conditions, and limited traffic means that snow and ice can accumulate, making driving more difficult. In addition, black ice can be especially hazardous on low-lying blacktop roads. It is crucial for drivers to slow down, increase their following distance, and avoid sudden braking or acceleration.
- 2 Wind:** Areas lacking natural wind breaks, such as trees or hills, can experience high winds that affect driving stability. Be prepared for sudden gusts and keep a firm grip on the steering wheel to maintain control. Reduce your speed to account for the impact of high winds. Remain cautious and be prepared to stop promptly if obstacles or debris are blown onto the road.
- 3 Rain and water:** Rain can create slick road surfaces, reducing tire grip and increasing the risk of hydroplaning. In rural areas, where drainage may be less efficient, standing water can accumulate on the road and heavy rain can reduce visibility which can be especially challenging on roads with limited sight distance. After a prolonged drought, rain on blacktop roads can create extremely slippery conditions.
- 4 Fog:** Fog is a common weather phenomenon occurring when the air temperature and dew point are close. It often forms in the morning until the sun warms the area and dissipates the fog. Rural areas tend to experience more fog due to cooler nighttime temperatures and the presence of vegetation, which contributes to higher moisture levels and fog formation which can significantly reduce visibility. If available, use fog lights and reduce speed when driving in foggy conditions.
- 5 Temperatures:** Extreme temperatures take a toll on road infrastructure. Wear and tear accelerate, leading to the formation of potholes, cracks, and other defects. Unfortunately, rural roads often receive less frequent maintenance, exacerbating these issues. In regions with cold climates, frost heave occurs when water in the soil freezes and expands resulting in the road surface being pushed upward and creating uneven, bumpy sections. Conversely, during scorching heat, asphalt surfaces can soften and develop soft spots, while cement roadways may buckle unexpectedly. These sudden bumps and uneven surfaces pose challenges for drivers, requiring them to adjust their driving behavior accordingly.

For additional information related to driver safety, visit MyNSightOnline.com/DriveThe5

For further guidance, refer to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration — Driving in Severe Weather (nhtsa.gov/road-safety/driving-in-severe-weather).



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.

NationwideAgribusiness.com

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Toolbox Talk

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Discussion notes:
