

SAFELY SPEAKING

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Winter Driving Safety

When most residents are relaxing at home during a winter snowstorm waiting for conditions to improve, employees of IMWCA members are put to the test, clearing our streets and roads and answering the call for police, fire and emergency services. Just getting to the shop to get in the equipment can be a challenge. Here are a few winter weather driving tips to help you get through the season safely.

First, keep your vehicle in good condition. Check the tires, battery, wipers, lights, mirrors and all fluid levels. Keep at least a half tank of fuel, and top your tank off before starting out on a trip. It's a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle in case you become stranded. Some items to include are a flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, extra warm clothing, bottled water and a blanket or sleeping bag. If you are going on a long trip, be sure to check the weather along your route. Remember, if you get stranded in winter, the engine could be your only source of heat.

If your vehicle was sitting out and is covered with snow or frost, go ahead and start it to let it warm up. While it's warming, clear all the snow and ice; don't take off with just a tiny patch of the windshield cleared. The snow on the roof or hood of the vehicle will blow off as you gain speed, and it will block your view or

the view of the vehicle behind you.

Winter weather conditions in Iowa include sleet and freezing rain. Even a small accumulation of either can cause significant driving hazards. Winter roads require greater stopping distances. The posted speed limit is for ideal road conditions, not blowing snow and icy roads. The number one cause of winter driving crashes is failing to allow enough stopping distance. Increase your space cushion between you and the vehicle ahead. This will provide room to stop or maneuver safely to avoid a collision. Remember, at 30 degrees Fahrenheit ice is twice as slippery as at 0!

Most vehicles today have anti-lock (ABS) brakes. Studies indicate about half

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Does your city or county operate wing plows? Are you interested in how they work? If yes, here's a link to an 11 minute video from the Michigan Department of Transportation that explains how to safely inspect and operate wing plows in winter conditions. This is an excellent overview for a new plow operator as well as a good refresher for experienced operators: <http://vimeo.com/8310293>.

Iowa travel information: www.511ia.org/

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the drivers on the road are not aware of the difference between traditional and ABS brakes. In an emergency stop with ABS brakes, push the brake pedal all the way to the floor and keep the pressure on. Don't pump the brakes, which will prevent the ABS from working.

Above all, use your best judgment when driving in winter conditions. Consider if the trip is necessary, or if you can wait until conditions improve. Always follow your employer's policies and procedures. Take the time and care to treat yourself and your vehicle like the professionals you are. Both will respond with better results and at the end of the shift, you will return home safe.

Second Annual Solid Waste Safety Day

IMWCA will host the Second Annual Solid Waste Safety workshop at the Zeigler Caterpillar facility in Altoona on February 27, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The workshop is geared towards landfill, recycling and transfer station operators as well as municipal garbage collection services. The agenda includes topics on safety training methods, preparing for the transition to the Globally Harmonized System, personal protective equipment policies and a panel discussion on developing and maintaining a safety committee for your facility. The workshop is free and lunch is provided. Interested members can register on the IMWCA Web site. Contact imwcainfo@iowaleague.org for more information.

You don't see penguins slip and fall on ice. Know why?
They walk flat footed.
They take shorter steps.
They concentrate on maintaining balance.
They keep their head up and don't lean forward.

Do the penguin shuffle!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmWhURt0_ik&noredirect=1

Slip & Trip
Trivia

IMWCA to Host Regional Workshops



This year's workshop topic will focus on the change in calculating experience modification factors and the effect it will have on members.

See dates, times and locations or register for the free workshops at www.imwca.org.



How will you make your New Year's Resolution successful?

New Year's Resolutions date back hundreds of years, and millions of Americans make resolutions each year. But a perhaps not-so-surprising fact: Most people do not keep their resolutions all year. In fact, a third will not make it to the end of January without breaking their resolution, and by the time July rolls around more than half will have fallen off the wagon. Why is this, and how can you increase your chances of keeping your goal?

The simple and short explanation for why people do not keep their resolutions is that they lose the willpower. Social scientists have reported that willpower is not just a term, but rather a real form of mental energy that is powered by glucose in the bloodstream. This energy can become depleted, especially the more it is used to fight temptation. So your best bet – expend some energy in the beginning setting up your daily life to avoid temptations, rather than using all of your energy (or “willpower”) resisting them when they are in front of you. A 2011 study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology revealed that individuals with the most self-control used their willpower less often, therefore conserving the energy.

According to research by Yale University Economists, people are far more likely to reach their goals when they have entered some sort of commitment contract. They're also more likely to be successful when there are incentives, or when something is at stake – money, their reputation, etc. And of course a “referee” to monitor progress and supporters also increase chances of success.

With online tools and apps for your smartphone, tracking progress of a goal is easier than ever. One Web site, www.stickk.com, allows you to enter your goal, track progress, and even lay money on the line as an added incentive. For example, each week the goal is not made, they will take a set amount of money from your credit card, and then at the end of the contract they'll send what you lost to the designated recipient.

So this year, make your New Year's Resolution successful by setting a likely goal – don't make it too hard. And use whatever tools needed to track progress so that you have the most chance of being successful. The fact that you actually make a goal will leave you 10 times more likely to change compared with someone with the same goal and motivation that does not make the resolution.

Source: www.nytimes.com

A reminder about newsletter changes

This is the final issue of *Safely Speaking* as a separate newsletter. Starting January 2013, it will be included with *The Informer* and issued monthly. Each issue of *The Informer* will include safety-oriented articles under the *Safely Speaking* banner. Since the vast majority of readers have been subscribing to both, it just made sense to combine the two and address a wider variety of issues in each edition. Readers from both newsletters will continue to receive the new version of *The Informer*.



Happy Holidays
 ...from all of us at Iowa
Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association and the Iowa League of Cities.
 Our office will be closed
December 24 - 25 and January 1
 so employees may enjoy the holidays with their family and friends. Have a joyful and safe holiday season!