

John Meola's
Safety First!
Safety Meeting Topics
for WSA Members



February Safety Info

Cold & Flu Season Best Practices

Defensive Driving for Winter

PPE for All Season Protection

Ergonomics for Field Crew Protection

Slip & Fall Avoidance – Footwear

Achoo! Excuse Me!

- ❓ General state of health is a strong predictor of susceptibility. Negatives include fatigue, poor sleep habits, junk food in diet, etc.
- ❓ Cover your mouth and nose if you SNEEZE- carry a tissue!
- ❓ Hydration level is important year-round – give best defense against random spread of virus
- ❓ Awareness for contact surfaces – hands primarily- Wear a GLOVE when touching shared contact surfaces
- ❓ Gas pumps, door knobs and handles, public spaces, hand railings on stairs, etc. Avoid direct skin contact when possible.
- ❓ Keep sanitizer handy, use often, WASH HANDS with soap & water often
- ❓ Consider face mask protection in extreme cold; eye protection; skin lotions or barrier crème for exposed skin
- ❓ Avoid energy drinks and supplements – drink water or juices, Gator-ade or other electrolyte replacement to maintain hydration
- ❓ Avoid spreading a cold if you have symptoms. “More hand washing, less hand shaking”

Winter Driving Safety Tips

- Early morning – be alert for Black Ice; bridges and pavement may ice up overnight. This may not be apparent to drivers.
- Allow vehicle to warm up & defrost; clean glass for vision; use DRL's or flip the switch. Start out slowly.
- Dress for the drive- avoid bulky clothes while driving, no hoodies. Freedom of motion and viewing is key.
- Select best eyewear for glare; use caution in residential areas where walkers, hikers, joggers, kids walking to schools, bus routes, etc. Pedestrians may be obscured by many factors, or walk in the roadway too close to travel lanes.
- Wear your HIGH VIZ VEST when 'boots on the ground'; encourage other on foot to wear or carry high viz
- Carry spare windshield fluid – use liberally to keep glass clear; run defroster; carry a scraper & clean the vehicle before moving out. Allow a bit of extra time to get it right before rolling out. Daily vehicle inspection check-off item.
- Moderate speed in rural areas; 2 lane undivided roads do not offer much room for error; use alternate routes or improved roads when available; use toll roads when available; divided highways are safer; school zones & bus routes - use extra caution. Time your drive or commute to avoid congestion
- Automatic trans. – make sure the shift is in PARK securely before exiting vehicle. Apply foot brake securely before shifting into Park. This relieves the vehicle weight on the transmission, particularly on slope or grade. This can occur when we are in & out of vehicle often; make sure to engage the PARK setting securely to prevent roll away.

PPE –Year 'round

- Gloves- select the best all purpose glove type for the task- i.e. driving – high grip is recommended
- LEATHER gloves have limited application. Leather will absorb whatever it comes into contact with. Be aware of cross contamination on surfaces, tools, etc. Leather has low coefficient of friction. Requires more grip strength to grasp or manipulate tools or objects. High grip gloves are better suited, plus they are generally impermeable to liquids.
- Protect the EYES. Air borne droplets can stay suspended in still air for long periods. Ski goggles, good.
- Cold air is usually dry; protect the eyes against direct irritating cold air.
- Use a helmet liner with hard hat - this creates a well-insulated head covering, minimize heat loss, plus holds the hat securely.
- Dress in light layers; select best garment and fabric for the exposure; outer layer should be wind and moisture resistant.
- Use knee pads or other interface when kneeling. Avoid contact with hard surfaces.
- 2 layers of socks – good. Spare change out of footwear for wet or extreme cold – good.
- Scarf – good but tuck in the ends. Secure drawstrings, loose ends, against snag hazard.

Basic Ergonomics for Field Crews

- Warm up stretching is recommended before any activity, including driving
- Simple stretching helps align soft tissue and pump blood flow circulation
- Caution when reaching – arm above shoulder, out of position lift or reach - can expose to strain.
- Stay in the strength zone – central waist range- for best posture, lifting and handling force, etc.
- Extra caution – working on or around the bed of a truck. Reaching & pulling, loading & unloading, etc. Break loads down to smaller quantity.
- Housekeeping on truck bed is important if you need to climb up. Trip or snag hazards are common. Avoid clutter; store tools securely.
- Use caution when swinging tools. Check your posture, stance, direction, surroundings, PPE, radius, obstacles, snag hazards. Use a tool handle or holder when available on striking tools. Keep edged tools sharp and protected when not in use.
- Even driving a simple stake – bending, awkward posture, missed strike; fragmented materials, splinters, loose tool parts, etc.
- Wear grip gloves for best tool control; carry a long handled tool for upper body stability; watch where you step, stand, climb
- Be aware of weight transfer when climbing, such as slopes, granular surfaces. In & out of the vehicle included. Use grip handles on doors or cab interior.
- Use caution when opening vehicle doors in high wind or turbulence. Door can become a sail and fly open. Open slowly to depressurize cab.
- Use the door brace, not opening handle to control and manipulate the door.

Slip, Trip & Fall Avoidance

- Because we are often navigating uneven surfaces, one pair of boots may not be appropriate for all conditions.
- For example, driving with muck boots is not such a good idea. For an extended commute or drive on the job, consider changing into a more appropriate footwear in the cab.
- Most of our vehicles will accommodate a wide range of footwear, but you can improve the equation when appropriate.
- Keep footwear in proper condition – when the edges of soles or heels start to round off, you sacrifice grip, cornering, stepping security.
- Be aware of upper-body weight transfer under all locomotion activity and conditions. Irregular and unpaved surfaces, snag hazards, foreign materials. Ice, oil, fluids (especially anti-freeze): all can create a slip hazard.
- Check your footwear to avoid tracking of contaminants. Use a wire brush to remove mud or other materials.
- Keep cab floor clean as much as possible. Dirt creates granular abrasion on boots and interiors.
- Change out footwear if soaked; carry spare alternate; allow boots to air out and dry overnight for better foot health.
- Use 3 point stance for practically all climbing activity. Test your footing on unknown surfaces.

Avoid 'tippy toe' step or climb. Fully engage foot into rung or step surface. Use a secure grip for when foot slips.