Hazardous Weather Safety Checklist



No matter what time of year it is, the weather can have a big effect on your safety both on and off-the-job. Even if you don’t actually work outside, just getting to and from work in bad weather can be hazardous.

Driving when the weather is bad can be very dangerous. During a rain or snowstorm for example, visibility is reduced for all drivers including you, pedestrians are harder to spot, and your tires are more likely to skid on the slippery road surface. Using caution when driving in bad weather is your best defense. The following safety measures may help:

- Slow down, below the speed limit, and keep a safety buffer between your car and the others on the road.
- Make yourself familiar with the dashboard controls. Then if you need to dim your lights, adjust the speed of the wipers, or de-mist the windows if you can do it without looking away from the road.
- Avoid hard braking. Steer by using a light touch.
- Also avoid driving through deep puddles or flooded areas. If you must, drive very slowly and carefully. Water can do several things to your car. Puddles can cause your tires to “hydroplane” or lose contact with the road surface. Deeper water can wet the brakes and prevent them from functioning when needed. And if splashed up into the engine compartment, the water can stall your car – stranding you in the flooded area.

Walking in bad weather can be difficult as well. As we mentioned earlier, rain makes you harder to see, so take extra care around vehicles.

- Make sure drivers see you. Wear light colored or reflective clothing when walking in bad weather, or after dark.
- Wear proper footwear to help you keep your footing. Snow, ice and even rain can send you sprawling unexpectedly on a sidewalk, at a crosswalk or at a bus stop.

If you must work outside during bad weather, be aware of other hazards as well:

- High winds can knock you off ladders or scaffolding, while rain, ice or snow may cause you to slip and fall. Avoid working in these hazardous conditions.
- Beware of lightning that may result in electrical shock or electrocution.

- In heavy rain storms, stay away from possible sources of flooding, such as rivers, underpasses and large storm sewers.
- In some areas, a hail or thunderstorm can be the first sign of an approaching tornado. Listen to a radio for weather warnings. Do exactly what you are instructed to do on the radio. But, make sure you find cover inside a solid building or storm shelter. Vehicles or mobile homes are not safe because they can be lifted and destroyed by the winds.
- Excessive heat can be a hazard to your safety as well as your health. In hot weather, slow down, dress for the conditions and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids. The added heat can make you feel irritable and distracted so take your time and pay close attention to your work.
- Severe weather conditions can also be a safety risk when you are enjoying your favorite sport such as golf, baseball or even sailing.
- When you see lightning, or think a thunderstorm is on the way, get off the baseball diamond, leave the golf course and get to shore if you are swimming or boating.
- Get rid of metal baseball bats and golf clubs. Move away from tall metal masts on your sailboat. They are all good conductors of electricity.
- If you can’t get inside a building quickly enough, find a low spot and crouch down. Never take shelter under a tall tree.

Whether you are working outside, commuting to work or relaxing on your days off, keep an eye on the weather. It can be a welcome friend but also a dangerous adversary.