AIG

Defensive Driving – Adverse Conditions

Defensive driving is driving so as to prevent accidents in spite of the incorrect actions of others or adverse driving conditions, such as weather, traffic, lighting, vehicle or road condition, or the driver's physical or mental state. The defensive driver assumes that other drivers may make mistakes and is on guard in the event an error is made.

Your safety program should include defensive driver training on the proper way to drive in adverse conditions. Failure to adjust to adverse conditions is a major factor in accident causation. The adverse conditions most frequently encountered result in reduced traction and reduced visibility. Conditions that reduce traction include rain, snow, ice, slush, and gravel. Reduced visibility conditions include twilight, darkness, rain, snow, and fog. Drivers should not only develop the skills and judgment necessary to keep their own vehicle safely under control, they should also try to anticipate and be prepared to compensate for errors other drivers make during such poor driving conditions. The following are management areas that should be addressed regarding defensive driving and tips to provide your drivers to help them become defensive drivers.

Management Issues	Yes	No
Have drivers been trained to safely maneuver on slippery surfaces and under reduced visibility conditions?	☐	☐
Is there a safe off-road area available to drivers for practicing vehicle handling on slippery surfaces?	☐	☐
Do your drivers know what causes jack-knifing and how to prevent it?	☐	☐
Do trip schedules take into account the potential effect of inclement weather?	☐	☐
Are tire chains provided when operating in areas that warrant their use?	☐	☐
Do you know if your drivers operate safely on slippery surfaces and under reduced visibility conditions?	☐	☐
Do you periodically have qualified personnel ride with your drivers to assess their driving habits?	☐	☐
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Driver Tips

To be a defensive driver when driving in adverse conditions, your drivers should:

- Increase following distance enough to avoid a rear-end collision if a driver in front brakes hard.
- Keep headlights, taillights, mirrors, windows, and windshield clean.
- Use emergency flashers as necessary.
- Apply brakes gently and steer without jerky movements.
- Be extremely cautious when running empty or bobtailing in slippery conditions. Lightly loaded wheels lock up easily during braking and this induces jack-knifing.
- Beware of traveling too slowly on slick, banked curves. The vehicle might slide sideways into traffic or slide off the road.
- Be prepared to get off road and wait for conditions to improve, if necessary.

For more information, contact your local AIG representative.