

Driving In Hazardous Conditions

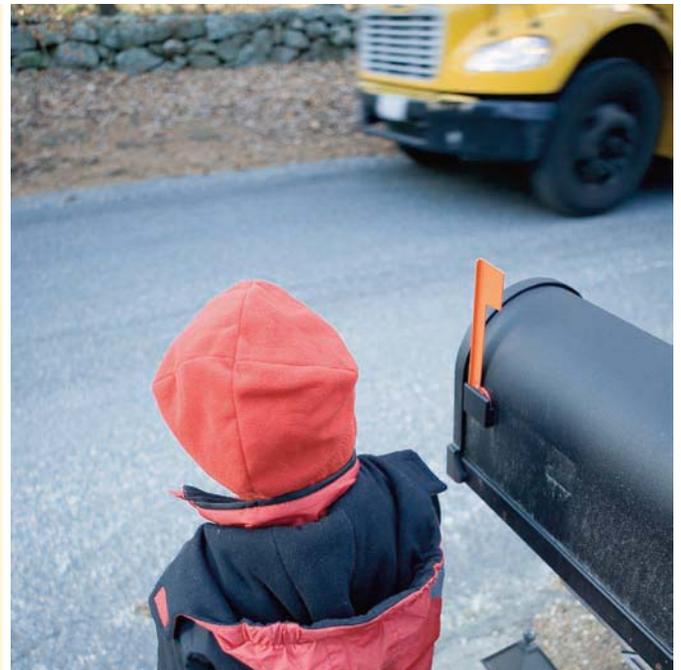
As winter quickly approaches, a review some of the hazardous conditions faced while driving at this time of year is warranted. Driving a school bus in hazardous conditions requires special skills and a driver's undivided attention, as well as the knowledge of what to do when faced with the varying conditions that are present in times of inclement weather.

The following information provides some guidelines that will assist in operating your bus safely in hazardous conditions.

SNOW, ICE AND RAIN

Snow, ice and rain severely limit the traction of a vehicle. When you are driving in these conditions, maintain a slow, steady speed. Rapid acceleration is likely to cause skidding or cause the wheels to dig in. Brakes, when used, should be applied lightly and released quickly if skidding begins. Hard-packed snow or ice is more dangerous to drive on than fresh snow. For driving in these conditions, you should take the following precautions:

- Adjust the speed of the vehicle to existing conditions.
- Increase the normal safe distance between vehicles to allow for hazardous conditions. Following distances should be increased to at least 6-8 seconds if driving at speeds 40 mph or less, and 8-10 seconds at speeds exceeding 40 mph.
- Slow your vehicle gradually to allow for maximum control of your vehicle. When arriving at a school bus stop, always stop at a safe distance before the actual loading zone. This will allow for increased stopping distance in case your vehicle skids—preventing any accidents involving children waiting at the school bus stop.
- Slow down when approaching bridges, overpasses, and shady areas in the road.



- Keep the outside of the windshield and windows clear of snow, ice, and frost at all times, and use the vehicle defroster to improve visibility.
- Turn on headlights and use extreme caution when driving in fog. Use only low beam headlights, especially in foggy conditions. This will allow you to see the road immediately in front of you, while at the same time allowing other motorists to see clearly.
- Apply brakes with a light pumping action to prevent skidding and use engine compression to help control the vehicle. Avoid pumping brakes with ABS braking system-equipped vehicles.
- Signal well in advance to warn others of an intended stop or turn.

Under any weather condition, you should always remember that YOU are the professional. You need to control your emotions, your vehicle, and remember basic driving skills associated with driving in hazardous conditions.