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Winter Driving: Keeping Workers Safe on Snowy, Sleety Roads

Last year motor vehicle crashes cost Pinnacol policyholders an average of $17,980. According to OSHA, when a worker has an on-the-job crash that results in an injury, the cost to the employer is $74,000, and costs can exceed $500,000 when a fatality is involved. In fact, vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among our nation's workers. This time of year, wintry roads can prove especially hazardous.

Ensure vehicle systems are working properly

Now is a good time to encourage your employees to perform the following vehicle maintenance:

- Scheduled maintenance: Schedule service for an oil change, coolant flush and brake inspection based on the mileage and manufacturer's maintenance schedule. Address any maintenance issues with the vehicle's battery, electrical system, hoses and belts.
- Fluids: Check to ensure proper oil, coolant, transmission and other fluid levels.
- Tires: Check for proper tread depth and for signs of damage or uneven wear. Ensure tires are properly inflated.
- Visibility systems: Inspect turn signals, headlights, brake lights, defrosters (windshield and rear window) and wipers. Install winter windshield wipers.

For more detailed inspection checklists, visit the Colorado Department of Transportation pre- and post-trip vehicle safety checklist and Pinnacol's vehicle safety checklist.

Outfit vehicles with emergency essentials

Workers should be encouraged to outfit their vehicles for winter with emergency kits that include the following items:

- Cellphone or two-way radio
- Windshield ice scraper
- Extra windshield wiper fluid
- Snow brush
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Shovel
- Traction aids (bag of sand or granular cat litter)
- Emergency flares
- Jumper cables

- Snacks
- Water
- Road maps
- Blankets, change of warm clothes

Pinnacol Resources

For more information on shoring up winter driving safety at your organization, visit Pinnacol.com for articles, checklists, workplace posters and employee training resources. Additional resources are available on the websites of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and National Safety Council. Or contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call online or at 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752. Our safety services team stands ready to answer questions and help keep your workforce safe behind the wheel this winter.

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