



**THINK SAFE
STAY SAFE**



Tilhill

BSWGROU member of **binderholz** ■

SAFETY AND ASSURANCE BULLETIN

INSIST ON SAFETY

JANUARY 2024

New Year Resolutions

Hopefully everyone has had a very happy and festive period and that Santa has been good to all of you! You will all surely all be bright eyed and bushy tailed as you approach the start of work for 2024. Happy New Year!

Coming back to work the sites we left in December may have changed with weather, our minds have been on other things, daylight hours are short, the weather is seasonally poor and so now more than at any time in the year it is important to stop before you start.

Stop and take the time to review your site, your equipment and your risk assessment. Re-brief the risk assessment with all on site and walk to look at the difficult areas, especially where diffuse pollution is a risk.

It'll be no surprise to you that most diffuse pollution incidents occur over the winter.

The most significant risks on our sites will remain through 2023, and as with all previous year the best way we can manage these risks is by proper planning and our competence.

So I ask you to make some New Year Resolutions to always ensure the work you are doing has been properly planned, those plans are known to all on site and that you STOP if something changes or isn't going to plan. Stopping and reassessing is a hugely powerful tool. It gives us time to adapt and change. Carrying on and hoping for the best rarely results in the outcomes we all desire.



**If in doubt
STOP and ask**

In this edition

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Winter Driving

Give yourself more time to de-ice your vehicle and clear snow from the whole vehicle.

In our November bulletin we wrote about the changing conditions and driving safely in the wet and foggy conditions. This month we will look at snow and ice which we commonly experience in the second half of winter.

The roads can be dangerous in winter when there's snow, ice or sleet. Stopping distances can be 10 times longer when it's icy. Gentle manoeuvres and slow speeds are the key to safe driving in ice and snow.

Safe Vehicle

Give yourself more time to de-ice your vehicle and clear snow from the whole vehicle. Snow on a vehicle roof can flick off backwards as you drive, hitting the vehicles behind you. It can also slump forward over the windscreen during braking. This is especially likely when the underside has begun to melt as the vehicle's cabin warms up.

Check your vehicle over regularly during winter conditions. Check fuel levels – have at least a quarter of a tank of fuel available in case of unexpected delays. Use a suitable additive in your screenwash to reduce the chance of it freezing. Make sure all car lights are working and the lenses are clean. If the roads are really mucky, you might have to clean your lights after every trip. Keep

number plates clean, to avoid fines. Check your engine has antifreeze. Antifreeze only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair.

Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the blades freeze to the screen, you could damage the blades or wiper motor when you turn the ignition on. Air-con demists the screen faster and reduces condensation.

Car batteries rarely last longer than 5 years. There are extra demands on them in the winter thanks to lights, heating and wipers. Turn off electrical loads like lights, heated rear window and wipers before starting the engine. Use the starter in short 5-second bursts and if the engine doesn't start quickly, wait 30 seconds between attempts.

Safe Route

Plan routes so you use major roads where possible. These are more likely to be cleared and gritted. Much of our work is accessed via smaller rural roads so consider local conditions before setting out and keep them under review enroute.

If you are struggling for traction pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel-spin. If you drive an automatic, check the handbook – some have a winter mode or recommend selecting '2' in slippery conditions. If your vehicle has regenerative braking (hybrid or electric) check the handbook for appropriate settings in ice and snow.

If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels. Put a sack or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip.

You must use headlights when visibility is reduced. If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.



continued

Winter Driving – continued

Driving uphill – leave plenty of room between other cars or wait until it's clear so you don't have to stop part way up. Keep a constant speed and try to avoid having to change gear on the hill.

Driving downhill – slow down before the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid braking. Leave as much room as you can between you and the car in front.

Safe Driver

Like the Scout Association motto says: 'Be Prepared'.

There are a few essentials you should keep in your vehicle when you're driving in winter, these will help you deal with ice, snow and dark winter nights:

- Ice scraper
- De-icer
- Torch
- Spare torch batteries.

You should also keep your phone charged.

No matter how safely you drive, there's still a chance you could get stuck somewhere in poor weather. Pack a winter emergency kit, just in case. That way you'll be prepared for a long wait in the cold. Here's what to include:

- Warm clothes, waterproofs and high-vis jackets.
- Sturdy footwear.
- Hot drinks and snacks.
- Shovel.
- Jump leads.
- Warning triangles.

No matter how safely you drive, there's still a chance you could get stuck somewhere in poor weather.



Mud on the Road

Punishment for these offences range from fines to imprisonment.

As described in the previous article wet and frosty weather is a hazard on rural roads. Mud being deposited on the road from timber haulage and other traffic coming out of forest roads exacerbates this and can be a significant hazard for other road users, particularly motorcyclists. It can result in serious and even fatal incidents.

Vehicle operators, contractors and farmers who deposit mud on the road are potentially liable for a range of offences. Below are just a few of the powers that are available to the Police (the list is not complete).

Highways Act 1980

- Section 137 – if a person, without lawful authority or excuse, in anyway wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway he is guilty of an offence.
- Section 148 states – if a person, without lawful authority or excuse a person

deposits anything whatsoever on a highway to the interruption of any user of the highway he is guilty of an offence.

- Section 149 states – if anything is deposited on the highway so as to constitute a nuisance/danger the Highway Authority can require the person who put it there to remove it forthwith. (mud causes skidding and is therefore dangerous and a nuisance).
- Section 161 states – if a person, without lawful authority or excuse, deposits anything whatsoever on a highway in consequence of which a user of the highway is injured or endangered, that person is guilty of an offence.

Punishment for these offences range from fines to imprisonment. Expenses incurred by the highways authority can also be recovered from having to clean an obstruction on the highway under the Act.



continued

Mud on the road – continued

What can we do to mitigate the risk of trailing mud out on to the road?

Here is one example:-

During a Harvesting job in Scottish Borders, where on average c.750 tonnes were despatched per week, coincided with prolonged periods of frost and snow, complaints were received from the local community council, via the South Scotland Timber Transport manager, that wagons were bringing mud onto the council road. Signage was in place highlighting Timber Wagons Turning and that there was the likelihood of Mud on Road.

An agreement was made with the purchaser of the standing sale that the

council road would be swept twice a week, at the access point, during the worst of the weather. An additional option was to consider laying c.150m of crushed stone to help reduce the amount of mud being brought out, but the majority of the remaining timber was to be taken out using another access that was awaiting planning permission to be widened. This work was completed to open up the other access to timber haulage. Good quality, crushed stone was brought in and laid, to create a better running surface and reduce the amount of material being brought out onto the council road. The access was shaped and drainage was in place to help ensure the entrance was kept as clean as possible.

Remember!

- Do everything possible to prevent mud being deposited on the road. This includes cleaning mud from vehicles as far as practicable before they are taken onto the road. The fact that cleaning mud off tractors and attachments is commercially inconvenient may not be a defence in law.
- Only use signs that are authorised. The recommended signs are: The 'Slippery Road' triangle with 'Mud on Road' sub plate and, if appropriate, the 'Men at Work' sign should be used. Signs must be at least 750mm. Check with your Local Authority/3rd party highways management contractor, e.g. BEAR Scotland, if there are any requirements to position warning signs on the road edge.
- Make sure signs are positioned to give maximum visibility and warning to other road users.
- Where appropriate clean the road as necessary during the working day and always at the end of the working day.
- Keep a written record of your decisions on whether or not to deploy signs and/or to clean the road.

Near Miss Reporting

Good near miss reporting and effective action taken is proven to lower rates of future injury.

The subject of near miss reporting is often discussed in safety circles. It is generally accepted that good near miss reporting and effective action taken is proven to lower rates of future injury. At Tilhill we support this and always encourage our staff and contractors to report near misses, property damage, safety concerns and anything else that had the potential to cause injury, pollution or loss.

To encourage the reporting good quality near misses this year we are launching a monthly 'Good Call Award'. Each month we will take all the reports we have received and will judge a winner. The

criteria we will be looking at includes: potential severity saved, action taken, applicability to other sites and how obvious it was. The issue or concern can be Health, Safety, Environment, Ecological, Social or Quality based. The winner each month will be awarded a voucher.

If you don't report a concern it can't be judged, remember it is the quality and substance that is being judged, not the volume you submit. The competition is open to all Tilhill staff, including office based staff and our approved contractors whilst working for us.

**Always INSIST
ON SAFETY**

January 2024 – Safety & Assurance Bulletin briefing

I have been personally briefed in the contents of this Safety & Assurance Bulletin.

Please add any questions relating to this briefing or any other health, safety and environmental matters you wish to raise:

Please add any suggestions on health, safety, sustainability, and/or environmental matters:

I have been briefed by: _____ My Tilhill Office is: _____

I understand that I am encouraged to submit comment and contribution from this bulletin.

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ORIGINAL sheet to be held at the Tilhill Office.

Send a **COPY** to: Head of Safety, Tilhill, The Gatehouse, Ruck Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 8EA. Fax: 01892 860441. Email: ios@tilhill.com

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