

When the Going Gets Rough

When you're cruising along a dry highway in the sunshine, it's good to remind yourself that conditions won't always be so ideal. Prepare for the next time you have to deal with rain, snow or ice.

Dangerous Moments

Almost any day, winter or summer, you're likely to find yourself on a wet highway. In areas where rain is sparse, the most dangerous moments often come when the first raindrops hit the surface. A little moisture combined with the grease and grime on a dry highway can make for extremely slick conditions.

Other motorists may not recognize the hazard, and it's not uncommon to see a four-wheeler hit the brakes and spin out in the lane just ahead of you.

As soon as you see the first raindrops, you have to slow down and allow more stopping room between your rig and the vehicles ahead.

Snow In July

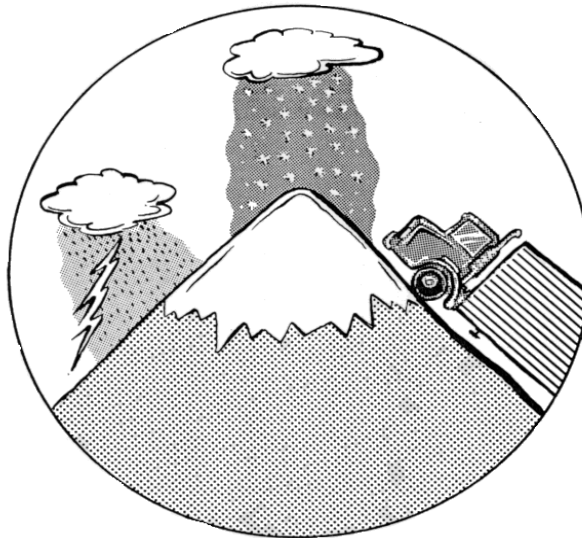
Snow, too, can come when you least expect it, especially if your routes take you over mountain passes. It's not uncommon to see snowflakes in July at the higher elevations of mountain states.

And, of course, when autumn and winter come, you know that you'll be driving in heavy snow at one time or another. Keep your tires and windshield wiper blades in top shape and carry chains at all times.

Put them on when snowfall gets heavy and stop often to clear snow and salt off your lights and reflectors.

Rain, Snow and Ice

Keep your window clear. Carry warm clothing in case you get stranded in a blizzard. Know how to make the best use of your heater and defroster.



Read the section in your operator's manual that tells how the controls work.

Watch For Ice

On icy roads, cut your speed by two-thirds. Stab repeatedly at your brakes instead of applying constant pressure. Use the clutch to slow down. If you're on glare ice, the engine brake may make things worse. Turn it off. Bridges may be icy even when approach roads are clear. Cross them at an even speed, neither speeding up nor slowing down.

What to Do In a Skid

The best advice if your tractor

starts to skid is to steer in the same direction that the rear axle is moving. Stay off the brakes and correct with the accelerator, doing the opposite of what you were doing when you went into the skid. If you were slowing, speed up gradually. If you were accelerating, slow down.

If You Start To Jackknife

The worst outcome of a skid is a jackknife, when the angle between the tractor and trailer becomes so extreme that you can't straighten it out. If this starts to happen, disengage the clutch, counter steer and stay off the brakes.

But if the angle reaches 15 degrees, it's virtually impossible to correct.

Your best bet is to stay out of trouble in the first place. Make smooth movements, go slowly, and brake ahead of turns, not in them.

The smartest policy on wet pavement is to give yourself plenty of time. Slow down and get there safely.