

6 tips on

DRIVING A SCHOOL BUS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS



Of course, driving a school bus in icy and snowy conditions calls for some extra care and attention. To make it easier for you, we recommend keeping a few things in mind. Some are quite obvious while some are not, but they all serve to help you make it safely through the route.



1.

Don't guess the weather

Even if you don't see any signs of changing weather right now, it's a good idea to always check the weather report. By doing so you can avoid unpleasant surprises. Driving in adverse conditions is easier and safer if you're properly prepared.



2.

Know your brakes and tires

When the road gets slippery, braking may feel uneasy – especially the first couple of times in the winter season. There’s a big difference between ABS and non-ABS brakes, so you must know exactly how the brakes in your bus behave. It’s a good idea to practice braking in slippery conditions so you feel safe and comfortable. Also, don’t forget to check the tire tread depth.



3.

Use traction equipment – in time

Prepare – and use – your traction equipment before you get into that slippery and tricky situation. For example, engage the automatic tire chains in good time before stopping at the bus stop or at the traffic light. By this you avoid getting stuck with spinning wheels when the light turns green. If you don't have automatic tire chains on your bus, don't forget to clamp the wheels correctly before mounting conventional tire chains.



4.

Higher hills – lower gear

It doesn't matter if you're going uphill or downhill, the grade of the road makes the slippery situation worse. Consider climbing or going down the entire grade in the same – lower! – gear. Avoid downshifting in the grade, since you could lose traction. Instead, shift down before you get to the grade and keep moving at a slow, steady pace. If you need to brake downhill, brake carefully, using the appropriate method for your kind of brakes.



5.

Dress for convenience – not for the North Pole

Just because it's freezing cold outside, your bulky and super warm jacket may not be the best option. Actually, it could restrict your movement. Instead, wear layered clothing that you can easily slip in and out of. Keep your head and feet warm, but don't wear heavy boots since they make it harder to quickly move from the gas to the brake pedal. Also, use gloves with leather palms, as leather or suede will give a good grip to the steering wheel – wool won't!



6.

Expect the unexpected – slow down!

Even if you are in full control of your vehicle, other drivers in traffic may not. To reduce the risk of accidents, or traffic incidents, slowing down is the best precaution. When you're experiencing a difficult driving situation, you could tell your students that you need their cooperation and ask them to be quiet and behave. It's safer for all.

