

At the sight of significant rain, the natural inclination is to stay indoors. That's not always an option for our employees, who are often required to brave the elements in order to keep the power on. Working outdoors during significant storm events presents many risks and can even be fatal if the proper precautions are not taken to ensure that employees stay dry, warm and safe. Preparation is the key to being able to work effectively during significant storm events. Below are some suggested protective and preventive measures for working during prolonged rain events.

Before Going Out in the Storm:

Check local media and sites that monitor weather and road conditions for warnings, such as road closures, flooding, wash-outs and heavy snow or ice:

!! HYPERLINK <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/Hourly> ¶ <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/Hourly> (CalTrans hourly reports)

!! HYPERLINK <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/frequent>

¶ <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/frequent> (common highways, every 10 minutes)

Make sure you have adequate gear for conditions, such as flashlights, good windshield wiper blades, high rubber boots, raingear, disinfectant wipes, extra food and water and extra clothing.

Inspect your vehicle thoroughly, especially tire pressure and tread, lights (including brake lights and hazard lights) and any potential steering or brake issues. Check all fluids.

Make sure your fuel tank is full.

Know your route and destination, and make sure someone else knows where you are heading and when. Be prepared to notify them in case you need to change your plans.

Be aware that you should allow extra time for travel, since you will need to slow down.

Always wear your seatbelt and avoid distractions – just getting there safely will require focus!

Prepare for Winter Driving and Changing Road Conditions:

Always obey road closure and flood warning signs. It is often not possible to tell what the condition of the road is or how deep the water is just from looking. There may not be a road surface under that water, or there may be hidden obstacles and debris. Water only 18" deep can float most vehicles, and many can be swept away or rolled in rapidly moving water only 6" deep. More than half the people killed in any flood event are in their vehicles at the time. Be prepared to turn around – don't drown.

Be alert for any signs of soil instability, such as mud slides, rock slides and falling trees or structures, or major cracks and pot holes in road surfaces. If you have to stop and can't turn around, pull over and use your hazard lights and if you have them flares or emergency beacons to warn other drivers. If you get out of your vehicle stay out of the road wherever possible, face traffic and wear reflective gear, such as a Class III traffic vest, to ensure that other drivers see you and that you can see them coming.

Use extreme caution prior to crossing low bridges, known low water spots and dry washes, and drainage areas, as these may be subject to flash flooding. If you are not sure you can make it through in time or the surface won't support the weight of your vehicle, turn around!

Prepare for Challenging and Unstable Conditions:

Other tailboards have addressed the topic of cold stress in great detail but it is an important topic and deserves mention here. If you are exposed to the cold and not properly protected, cold stress or

hypothermia, can occur. Cold stress can cause injuries ranging from frostbite to serious loss of body heat that can result in brain damage or death. The effects of cold stress may not be apparent to a victim, but it is a serious condition requiring immediate medical attention. Standing in water cooler than 75° F

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Safety Tailboard Safety in the Field

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SAFETY TAILBOARD•

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Safety in the Field Flood Hazards

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