



WINTER PLOW OPERATIONS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – HEAVY EQUIPMENT

November 2023

Snow and ice removal is crucial during the winter months, but it also comes with significant safety risks. We need to ensure that our operations are conducted safely and efficiently to protect both our team and the public. Let's go over some key safety points for street plow operation.

1. Pre-Operational Inspection:

- Before starting your shift, conduct a thorough inspection of the plow and its components. Check for any damage, malfunction, or missing parts.
- Verify that all safety features, such as lights and warning signals, are in working condition.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Always wear the appropriate PPE, which may include high-visibility clothing, gloves, and a hard hat.
- Make sure your seatbelt is fastened at all times when operating the plow.



3. Weather Conditions:

- Be aware of weather forecasts and road conditions.
- Adjust your speed and plowing technique according to the severity of the weather.

4. Route Familiarity:

- Be familiar with your assigned routes, including any potential hazards or obstacles, such as road intersections, bridges, and tight spaces.

5. Clear Communication:



- Establish clear communication if needed. Use two-way radios or other communication devices to stay in touch.
- Inform others of your plow's location and any obstacles you encounter.



6. Vehicle Safety:

- Drive slowly and maintain a safe following distance, especially when encountering other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Avoid sudden movements or sharp turns, which can cause the plow to skid or tip.

7. Blade Position:

- Be cautious when lowering or raising the blade or wing to prevent accidents or damage.

8. Visibility:

- Keep your windshield, mirrors, and lights clean and clear of snow and ice.
- Use defrosters and wipers to maintain visibility at all times.

9. Emergency Equipment:

- Have essential emergency equipment on board, including a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and flares.
- Be prepared to handle minor issues. What are some examples of these issues?

10. Breaks and Rest:

- Take regular breaks to rest and stay alert during long shifts. Fatigue can be a significant safety risk.
- Stay hydrated and keep snacks on hand to maintain energy levels.



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Operating a plow is vital for maintaining safe road conditions during the winter. However, safety should always be our top priority. By following these safety concerns and staying vigilant, we can reduce the risks associated with plow operations and ensure the safety of both our team and the public. Remember, your safety and that of others are in your hands.