

Eight Easy Steps For Snowplow Preparation

(NAPSA)—For snowplow owners, the key to a safe and productive snowplowing season is preparation. These eight easy steps will prepare and keep you and your snowplowing equipment heading in the right direction all season long.

1. Do your homework. Become familiar with your snowplow owner's manual. It provides valuable information such as maintenance procedures, operation guidelines and what to do when taking your plow out of storage. It also provides you with parts diagrams, parts lists, snowplowing tips and a troubleshooting guide.

2. Safety first. You should carry safety items in your vehicle at all times including a fire extinguisher, tool kit, tow strap, flashlight, flares, first-aid kit, fuses for your vehicle, jumper cables, an ice scraper, lock deicer, extra washer fluid, a shovel, and a bag of sand or salt.

"Your safety and the safety of others on the road are most important," says Rick Robitaille, marketing manager for The BOSS Snowplow. "Up here in Iron Mountain, Mich., winters are harsh; therefore, it's essential a safety kit is prepared for emergency situations."

Robitaille also suggests packing warm clothes, insulated boots and underwear, a winter jacket, hat, gloves, sunglasses, and a cellular phone or two-way radio.

3. In case of emergency...

As a minimum, your snowplow emergency parts kit should contain extra hydraulic fluid, hydraulic hoses, a pump solenoid, extra cutting-edge bolts and a trip spring.



4. Double-check. Because sub-zero temperatures can wreak havoc on your vehicle, you should routinely check your vehicle's tire pressure, engine belts for cracks and tightness and hoses for leaks. Also, systematically check fluid levels including the engine oil, brake fluid, transmission fluid, battery, radiator coolant and windshield washer fluid. And don't forget to fill your fuel tank.

A battery's biggest enemies are wet conditions and salt, which cause it to corrode. Therefore, check the battery terminals for deterioration and loose connections.

Other equipment that should be tested to ensure they are in good condition and working properly are the vehicle's windshield wipers and defrosters.

"Good visibility is extremely important when plowing snow for efficiency and safety reasons," says Robitaille. "Be sure to check the vehicle lights and plow lights before going out to plow. Examine the brake lights, turn signals and strobe light to be sure they're working properly."

5. Make a spectacle of yourself. If you don't have a strobe light or backup lights,

consider adding them. They will increase the visibility of your vehicle, especially while plowing in the dark or during severe winter conditions.

6. Get a grip. Proper weight distribution gives your vehicle better traction. You can improve its traction by balancing the weight of your vehicle with ballast.

"To achieve this, place ballast rearward of the back axle towards the tailgate of the vehicle," says Robitaille. "Be sure to properly secure the ballast in place to prevent it from shifting during sudden stops."

7. Look closely. Always check your snowplow's bolts to ensure they are tight, and examine your snowplow for cracked welds and hydraulic fluid leaks. Also, test and verify that your snowplow lights and turn signals are working and properly adjusted.

8. Don't wear it out. Get in the habit of always inspecting your snowplow cutting edge and plow shoes for wear.

"An overworn cutting edge can result in costly repairs to the snowplow," says Robitaille. "It's important to routinely examine the cutting edge and plow shoes after each job."

Preparing your vehicle and snowplow equipment for the winter can help prevent you from getting caught out in the cold.

"Now is the time to get your vehicle and plow ready," said Robitaille. "These eight snowplowing preparation steps will help you have a safe and worry-free plowing season."