Winter checklist for drivers and transport operators

Before the winter season

**Electrical parts**
- **Drive belt**
  - Inspect the drive belt for any cracks or worn rubber (drive belts can crack in extreme temperatures).
  - Check the belt tension (a loose belt can reduce alternator output and run down batteries).

**Electrical connections**
- Check the electrical connections between the vehicle and the trailer.

**Battery**
- Check battery charging, as starting the engine in cold weather makes the battery work much harder.

**Alternator**
- Check the charging rate of the alternator when the system is under full load with all equipment switched on.

**Fluids**
- **Radiator**
  - Inspect the condition of the radiator, hoses and the opening and/or closing of the thermostat.

- **Antifreeze**
  - Refill the antifreeze if necessary, using the antifreeze ratio recommended by the manufacturer.

- **Windscreen washer fluid**
  - Use a windscreen washer fluid that does not freeze in low temperatures.

- **Fluid levels of power trains**
  - Use high quality power train oil (to protect the engine and lubricate the gears in cold start situations).

- **Oil and oil filter**
  - Use the oil recommended by the vehicle manufacturer and manually check the oil level on a regular basis.

- **Air dryer cartridge**
  - Replace if necessary.

- **Water separator**
  - Drain the water separator in the fuel system.

**Tyres**
- **Winter tyres**
  - Use winter tyres bearing the marks M+S, M.S or M&S (they offer better traction and handling in a variety of winter conditions, especially when driving in mud and snow).
  - Fit winter tyres at least on the drive axle (check national requirements).

- **Tyre pressure**
  - Correctly inflate tyres for better grip, braking distance and handling (cold winter temperatures typically reduce tyre pressure).
  - Use the pressure recommended in the owner’s manual.

**Miscellaneous equipment**
- **In case of incident/accident**
  - Always carry a first aid kit, a map, an ice-scraper, a snow brush, a torch, warning triangles, flares, a tow rope, jump leads, a shovel, a bag of sand, a blanket, winter gloves and a mobile phone.

- **Auxiliary cab heating system**
  - Check that the system is working properly.
Drivers should take extra care when driving on snow and icy roads.

**Tyres**
- Check tyre tread meets national minimum requirements.
- Make sure that the vehicle is equipped with snow chains.

**Visibility**
- Keep the windscreen, washers, mirrors and lights clean and clear of snow and ice.
- Make sure that your wiper blades are in good condition and can fully clear your windscreen. Road salt and slush can inhibit visibility.

**Cleaning**
- Clear all snow and ice from your vehicle. This will help avoid sheets of ice flying off the vehicle, which is potentially dangerous for vehicles behind.

**Air intake**
- Keep air intake grills free of leaves, snow and ice. Don’t forget the air intake for your heating system.

**Lighting**
- Check all lighting systems, headlights for both dipped and full beam, indicators and rear lights. All lights must be free of snow and ice.

This checklist is provided to you by the IRU Academy, the training arm of the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

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