Plowing and Driver Fatigue

(Safety Brief)

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PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Many municipal departments are responsible for snow removal, yet have limited or outdated policies in place for managing driver fatigue during snow plowing and related operations. Not managing employee fatigue during winter weather events increases the risk of driver error, which can result in injury and property damage.

Establishing a policy–even an informal one–can help everyone involved better manage driver fatigue, rest periods and safety. If you have a policy regarding driver fatigue and storm events, review it with your drivers before the winter season, along with the practical tips and reminders below. You may also want to review the Safety Brief called "Winter Storm Preparations".

Talking Points for Training

1. These days, forecasts are fairly good about letting us know when storms are coming, so it is important that drivers get adequate rest in advance of the storm. This is the number one best defense against operator fatigue.

2. Before starting a long shift, avoid consuming items that can make you drowsy. Large meals, alcoholic beverages, prescription drugs, caffeine, and certain over-the-counter medications can all make you drowsy. It is also important to stay adequately hydrated.

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3. All drivers should be aware of fatigue symptoms, and know when it is time to stop and take a rest break. Common symptoms of fatigue include:

- Frequent yawning or catching yourself dozing off (if this occurs, pull over ASAP at the next safe location)
- Lack of visual focus. This can also occur during heavy snow events and can be hypnotizing.
- Missing a turn, location, or typical plowing procedure such a wing use, lifting or dropping the plow, etc,

4. While plowing, and whenever possible, keep a steady flow of fresh, cool air into the cab and sit with proper posture in your seat. Crack a window if necessary.

5. If you feel the onset of fatigue you should stop and consider one or more of the following:

- Get out of the truck at a safe, well-lit location and walk around the vehicle. Perform some gentle stretches and movements to get the blood flowing. This is also an opportunity to clean off lights, back-up cameras, and check safety equipment.
- If all else fails, you should stop in a safe location and take a short nap.

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer:	Training Date:
1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.
4.	12.
5.	13.

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6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

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