

Environment aware:

Navigating mountain roads safely

Use this guide to help lead a discussion with employees to raise awareness about potential hazards when driving in mountainous areas. Empower them with strategies to minimize risks and become safer drivers. Use the form on Page 2 to record meeting details.

Driving in mountainous terrain can be challenging. By understanding the unique conditions, maintaining your vehicle, and mastering mountain driving techniques, drivers can confidently tackle the twists and turns of mountain roads. Let's discuss key safety tips for mountain driving.

1 Know the grade:

- Understand the road grade you're driving on; it impacts your vehicle's performance and safety.
- Look for posted grade signs. E.g. 5% grade means 5 feet drop in elevation for every 100 feet traveled forward.
- Knowing the grade before descending or ascending allows you to prepare accordingly.
- Steeper grades require lower speeds to maintain control of the vehicle.

2 Engine care during climbs:

- Conduct a pre-trip inspection:
 - Ensure the coolant level is correct.
 - Check that fan blades are intact.
 - Clear the radiator of debris to allow proper airflow.
- Turn off the A/C to reduce engine load.
- Manually activate the engine fan before starting uphill.
- If overheating occurs, pull over safely and allow the engine to cool.

3 Descending with caution:

- Avoid excessive speed, which can lead to loss of control.
- Maintain a slow and steady pace by using the correct gear for the percent downgrade.
- A good rule of thumb: Descend in the same gear you used for climbing.
- Let the engine help control your speed. If available, use the engine brake retarder.
- Know the locations of runaway ramps and how to use them if needed.

4 Brake wisely:

- Riding the brakes can cause overheating and reduce effectiveness—this danger is amplified when driving downhill.
- Practice “snub braking” by briefly applying brakes to reduce speed by about 5 mph, then allow them to cool off before reapplying.

5 Hazard lights for safety:

- Use hazard lights to signal other drivers when navigating challenging road conditions.
- Activate hazard lights on steep uphill or downhill stretches to signify you're moving slowly or facing difficulties.

For additional information related to driver safety, visit MyNSightOnline.com/DriveThe5

For further guidance, refer to Colorado DOT Freight Mobility & Safety Branch The Mountain Rules (freight.colorado.gov/mountain-rules/mountain-rules).



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.

NationwideAgribusiness.com

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Toolbox Talk

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Discussion notes:
