

BUPERS/NPC SAFETY

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'Twas the night before Christmas and at the Claus place
Ol' Santa was angry, turning red in the face
"Who used my sled and brought it back, broke?
Dancer and Prancer, I'm in no mood for your jokes!"
"Honey," answered Ms. Claus, with calm and slight grin,
"the elves were out earlier, joyriding again.
The sled's beaten up and the reins a bit stuck,
So for this Christmas Eve, you must take the truck.
I'll ask Father Time to put a hold on the clock
To give you time to get everywhere -- here to Bangkok.
Give the deer the night off, but take an elf (or two)
And follow my safety tips so you'll know what to do.
Driving a truck isn't like steering your sled
And if you're not careful, you could wind up dead!
Listen here, Santa, as I explain how to winter drive
To deliver your toys safely and come back alive."

Santa paused a moment but then listened to his wife
For ignoring Mrs. Claus could have cost him his life!
"The first thing you should do is check out your ride
Look over and under and around every side.
Clear away snow or ice from your windows and lights,
Off the hood and roof, too, to not impede your sight.
All fluids should be full and right for the cold.
They make extreme-weather washer fluid (or so I've been told).
Unlike your sled and deer, trucks must be driven slow
So you don't lose control and end up in the snow.
Don't tailgate, don't speed, keep your eyes on the road
Remember, those presents give you quite a heavy load!
Your stopping time is longer; allow plenty of space
Between you and other drivers -- remember, this isn't a race!
Cruise control is no good in rain, snow, or ice
Even four-wheel drive is not an invincible device
The truck has ABS, so don't pump the brakes, dear
To slow the truck down safely, simply 'stomp and steer.'
If you start to skid, move your foot from the gas to the brakes
Steer in the direction of the skid. That's all it takes!
Don't panic, or pump, or swerve side to side
Stay calm and drive safely, or this could be your last ride!

If you're stuck in the snow, turn your wheels, but don't spin
You'll just dig yourself deeper and become stuck again!
Turn your wheels so you'll move the snow out of the way
Having emergency gear aboard also is sure to pay.
A shovel, cat litter, salt, gravel, or sand
These things, no doubt, will give you a big hand
And help you out of the rut and back on your way

So you can deliver the toys before Christmas Day!
Speaking of gear, here are more things you should take,
A safe, warm, and less stressful trip they will make!
A blanket, matches, whistle, flashlight, and rope,
Change of clothes and some food will make it easier to cope.
Keep your cell phone handy, but don't call and drive
And definitely don't text while steering to stay safe and alive!
Now, Santa, I know it's a lot to learn in a dash
But it's easy, and you'll remember it all in a flash!"
Santa stood up and smiled. His face was less red.
He had listened to everything Mrs. Claus said.
He was jolly and happy, back to his old self.
And no longer mad at the mischievous elf.
He checked the truck over, under, and side to side,
Loaded the toys and prepared for his ride.
Just before Santa took off on that dark, starry night,
He exclaimed, "I'll be careful and return safely tonight!"

-Don Merrell from JR Simplot