U.S. ARMY
EUROPE
AND AFRICA

SWORD OF FREEDOM

WINTER SAFETY DRIVING - GERMANY

USAREUR-AF Training

Overall Classification: **UNCLASSIFIED**

Training
FY2027
USAREUR-AF

Training Standard & End State

WHY THIS TRAINING MATTERS

- Protects personnel and the public by reinforcing safe driving practices during hazardous winter conditions.
- Reduces preventable mishaps involving Government-owned vehicles (GOVs), including collisions, injuries, and vehicle damage.
- Preserves mission readiness by keeping trained personnel and essential vehicles available to support operations.
- Promotes deliberate risk management by ensuring drivers recognize changing road, weather, and vehicle conditions.
- Reinforces individual responsibility for safe GOV operation before, during, and after each trip.

A winter safety driving brief is required for all military and civilian personnel driving motor pool, GSA, or military vehicles in the Europe theater (AEA Reg 385-10, Ch. 5-4.d(3)).

Traffic Accidents on Roads during the Winter in Germany

4,778

2025 personal-injury vehicle crashes were caused by snow/ice on the road.

4,138

2025 personal-injury vehicle crashes cited slipperiness caused by rain.

410

2025 personal-injury vehicle crashes cited poor visibility due to fog.

Germany recorded 2.52 million police-reported road crashes in 2025 – during the winter, only a fraction of the crashes results in personal injury, the majority of crashes are just property damage but often quite expensive.

- Snow is not the only hazard during the winter: rain, freezing rain, fog, frost, rapidly changing temperatures and poor visibility matter.
- For Army drivers, the safe decision may be to delay or cancel a movement even when the vehicle is technically dispatchable.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hwy_11_Ontario_Winter.JPG

Cold rain and slush can be the dominant hazard.

Any speed

Hydroplaning can occur at any speed; risk increases with the depth of puddles or standing-water depth on the road, worn tire tread, and improper tire pressure.

- Expect standing water, slush and spray on Autobahn routes.
- Reduce speed before the hazard — not while already hydroplaning.
- Use smooth steering/braking inputs and increase following distance.
- Winter washer fluid and functioning wipers are mission-essential in road salt and spray.

USAREUR-AF Motor Vehicle Mishap Summary FY 2022-2026

- USAREUR-AF experienced nine motor vehicle mishaps from FY 2022-2026, seven in Germany.
- Six motor vehicle mishaps occurred at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels.

Common hazards –

- **Traction loss on hills, black ice, and freeze-thaw roads**
- **Inadequate vehicle securement on icy slopes**
- **Continuing movement in clearly degraded conditions**

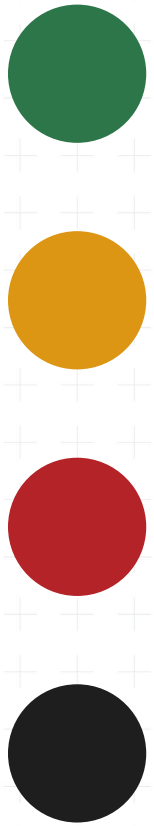
Prevention Focus –

- **Reduce speed below posted route limits when conditions degrade**
- **Increase following distance significantly on icy grades**
- **Treat bridges, hill crests, shaded turns, and downhill segments as black-ice danger areas**
- **Stop movement when slope/traction risk exceeds vehicle capability or crew confidence**

Army Rule: Check Road Conditions Before You Dispatch

German law is only one layer — local Army controls can be more restrictive.

- ✓ Check the IMCOM-Europe road-condition status for the garrison/route at https://home.army.mil/roads/.
- ✓ NTV use may be restricted when status is other than GREEN.
- ✓ Check again before the return leg: conditions can change during the duty day.
- ✓ Use AFN / My Army Post App (MAPA) / command channels as applicable for closures and updates.



GREEN

AMBER

RED

BLACK

GO / NO-GO is a leader + driver decision.

The 50-Meter Rule — Very German, Very Useful

< 50 m

Visibility due to fog, snow or rain

≤ 50 km/h

Maximum speed when visibility is under 50 m

50 m

Typical spacing of roadside delineator posts — a useful visibility gauge

- Rear fog light: use only when visibility through fog is less than 50 m - speed is limited to 50 km/h, regardless of posted speed limit.
- Do not rely on automatic headlights when it is foggy. Select the correct lights yourself.
- High beams can make the visibility worse by reflecting light back toward the driver.

Note: "Match the pace to the place."

A “Peephole” Is Not a Cleared Vehicle



Funny iced windshield GIF via Giphy

€10

Example warning fine for inadequately cleared windows.

€25

ADAC example for snow/ice left on hood or roof.

- Windshield + side windows
- Mirrors
- Headlamps + tail lamps
- Roof + hood
- License plates
- Sensors/cameras when equipped

€5

Obscured license plate.

TMP standard: do not accept “good enough.”

TMP Winter PMCS — Germany Edition

A winter-safe vehicle is more than four winter tires.

- ✓ Ensure all tires display the mandatory Alpine symbol.
- ✓ 4+ mm tread depth / correct pressure / no visible tire damage
- ✓ Brakes, ABS warning lights and steering in order
- ✓ Heater + defroster working
- ✓ Winter-rated windshield washer fluid
- ✓ Wipers and all exterior lighting in order and clean
- ✓ Battery condition: fully charged, clean, no damage
- ✓ Antifreeze/coolant full
- ✓ Exhaust system — no leaks
- ✓ Ice scraper + snow brush
- ✓ Required emergency equipment
- ✓ Sufficient fuel for delay/diversion
- ✓ Tire chains if driving in areas where required / needed

Germany Has a SITUATIONAL Winter-Tire Rule

5 conditions

Winter tires are required for:
Black ice • hard-packed snow • snow slush • ice • hoarfrost

ALL wheels

When the rule applies, all wheel positions must meet the winter-tire requirement.

NO fixed dates

German law mandates winter tires based upon the weather conditions, not a fixed timeframe.

Typically, these five conditions may appear between October and Easter. Therefore, the rule of thumb exists that you should have your winter tires mounted before October. If you drive close to the mountains or in the Grafenwöhr-Hohenfels area, you might need winter tires even earlier.

Driver question before dispatch:

“What are the actual road conditions on my route — now and during the return trip?”

German legal reference: StVO §2(3a)

DID YOU KNOW? — M+S Alone Is No Longer Enough



Source: ADAC, Winter Tires: Alpine Symbol / 3PMSF, accessed 09 SEP 26

⚠ Critical Risk: Severely degraded braking traction on ice and snow.

- The tire must carry the 3-peak-Alpine mountain & snowflake symbol (3PMSF) for driving in winter conditions. Ref. StVZO §36(4).
- Tires marked only “M+S” are no longer grandfathered (since 30 Sep 2024).
- All-season tires can qualify, but only if they carry the Alpine symbol.



“Drive smart – tire depth” by Linda Lambiotte, U.S. Army (USAG Rheinland-Pfalz)

1.6 mm

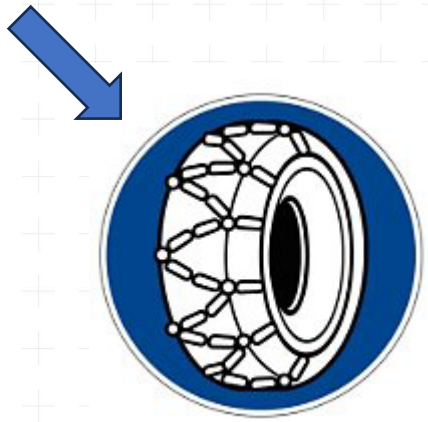
German legal minimum tread depth.

4 mm

ADAC safety recommendation for winter use.

Snow Chains — Know the Blue Sign

Sign means chains are mandatory from that point.



50 km/h

Maximum speed with snow chains — even under favorable conditions.

€20

Fine for ignoring a posted snow chain requirement.

- Install on the driven wheels; for AWD, follow the vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
- Practice installation before the mission — not on the shoulder in a snowstorm.
- Recheck tension after roughly 100 m and remove chains when the road is clear.

Behind the Wheel: Where Winter Mistakes Cost the Most

Examples of German winter-driving penalties.

€60 + 1 point	Drive in winter conditions without qualifying winter tires
€80 + 1 point	Same violation while obstructing other road users
€75 + 1 point	Vehicle owner permits use without required winter tires
€10	Only scrape a small “peephole” instead of clearing the windows
€25	Snow/ice left on hood or roof (ADAC summary)
€5	License plate obscured by snow/ice
€20	Ignore a posted snow-chain requirement
Up to €150 + point	Drive too fast with snow chains (depending on violation)
€85	Idling (letting motor run) while removing snow or stepping out for shopping



“Parked cars obstruct snow plows” by Petri Krohn, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

Black Ice: Where the Risk Catches Drivers

Black ice can exist when the rest of the road looks normal.

BRIDGES
Cold air reaches above and below the deck.

RAMPS
Acceleration, braking and steering combine.

ELEVATION
Conditions can change rapidly with altitude.



"Ice on the road" by Bill Boaden, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

WATER
Moisture in air is higher close to rivers, valleys and damp low areas.

SHADE
Forest and building shadows stay colder.

DAWN
Overnight frost may remain after sunrise.

If freezing rain creates sheet ice ("Blitzeis"), the safest control may be NO MOVEMENT.

Driving Technique: Make Every Input Smaller

Traction is a budget. Do not spend it all at once.

ACCELERATE

Progressively — avoid wheelspin.

STEER

Smoothly — avoid abrupt lane changes.

DISTANCE

Increase following distance well beyond dry-road habits.

BRAKE

Early and progressively; know whether ABS is operating.

CRUISE CONTROL

Avoid on slippery roads.

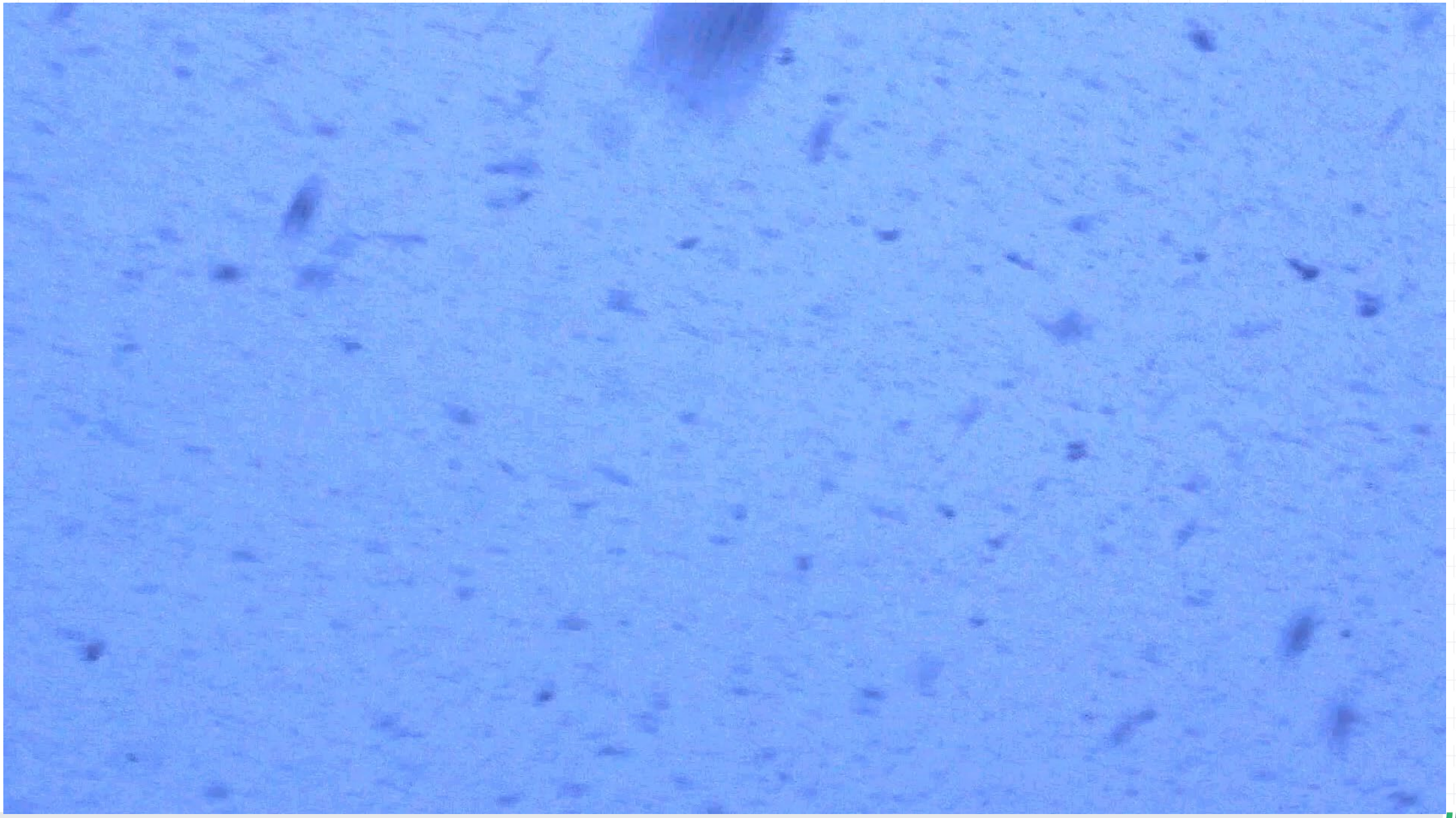
DOWNHILL

Slow before the descent; avoid sudden braking mid-curve.



"Sudden ice and frozen rain puddles" by Triplec85, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

If you need a dramatic correction, the hazard was recognized too late.



Army Winter Qualification — What Your Sources Require

For Army AMV/NTV operators, winter training is a licensing control.

- ✓ Winter Safety Driver training is required for AMV/NTV licensees, completed by 15 October, and indicated on the OF 346 - AEA Reg 385-10, 5-4,d,(3)(b).
- ✓ Supervisor verification / memorandum is used to document completion for the Drivers Testing Station.

15 OCT

Training completion documentation deadline.

OF 346

Military operator identification card / license referenced by the training.

Always follow the current local Driver's Training and Testing Station (DTTS) process.

TMP License Renewal / Replacement - Document Checklist

1. Copy of U.S./country driver license + USAREUR license (LN employees: front and back of EU license)
2. Copy of DA Form 348 + expired OF 346, if available
3. Personal descriptors requested by DTTS: hair, eyes, height, weight; civilians/LNs also position title
4. Last four of DoD ID
5. Proof of Winter Safety Driving Training - required OCT–MAR of every Fiscal Year (FY)
6. Unit keeps the training internally; ask safety/master driver for the correct dated certificate or memo

How to Validate the Winter Endorsement / Authorization

1

COMPLETE

Current FY winter driving orientation

→

2

DOCUMENT

Certificate or supervisor/commander memo with completion date

→

3

SUBMIT

Provide required documents to the local Drivers Testing Station

→

4

UPDATE

DTTS / licensing authority records the qualification as required

→

5

VERIFY

Operator + dispatcher confirm current authorization before TMP operation

Do not self-annotate an OF 346. Use the authorized local licensing/DTTS process.

Scenario — Wiesbaden to Grafenwöhr

0630: +1°C in Wiesbaden. Forecast: freezing rain east of Nürnberg. Return after dark.

- TMP has Alpine-symbol tires with adequate tread.
- Driver completed winter training last FY — no proof yet for the current FY.
- Road conditions are GREEN at origin; destination status is changing.
- Mission is important but not emergency response.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

A Go — tires are good.

B Get current training/documentation, recheck route + destination road status, then make GO/NO-GO decision.

C Go now and fix the license later.

BEST ANSWER: B

Quick Check — Germany Winter Driving

1. Is “October to Easter” the German legal winter-tire period?	NO — situational rule
2. Is an M+S-only tire acceptable in winter conditions in 2026?	NO — Alpine symbol required
3. What is the max speed with snow chains?	50 km/h
4. What is the max speed when visibility is <50 m due to fog/snow/rain?	50 km/h
5. What document is the Army operator license referenced by the supplied training?	OF 346
6. What proof must be on the local renewal sheet for the OF 348 for the timeframe OCT–MAR each FY?	Winter Driving Orientation proof

Training Completion / Supervisor Verification

I certify that the individual below completed the Germany Winter Driving / TMP Operator Training and reviewed the current winter-driving requirements.

NAME (Last, First)	
RANK / GRADE	
UNIT / ORGANIZATION	
DATE COMPLETED	
SUPERVISOR / VERIFYING OFFICIAL	
SIGNATURE / DATE	

IMPORTANT: Use the certificate/memo format required by your local Drivers Testing Station. This slide does not replace an official local requirement.