

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 87

Date: June 2025	Focus Group: All Vehicle Drivers
Topic: Losing Control on Black Ice	Issued by: Nic Steens

Background and Incidents: While driving along SH4 at approximately 6:15am, a driver hit black ice and experienced a minor loss of traction in a ute. Other road sections were also extremely frosted with black ice. In previous winters, similar events have been classed as high potential, involving work crews and/or multiple vehicles.

Injury Details: No injuries or damage occurred. This toolbox safety alert is a precautionary reminder.

Risk Awareness: Black ice can cause complete loss of control, including 360° spins and ineffective braking — posing an extreme crash risk. With NIWA forecasting a warmer winter, unexpected frosts may catch drivers off guard. Stay alert to black ice conditions and take extra care!

Safe Behaviours: to minimise the risks:

- Pre-check tyre tread depth and pressure before driving.
- Fully de-ice your vehicle to ensure clear visibility.
- Leave extra space between you and others.
- Watch for vehicles ahead suddenly swerving.
- Avoid over-steering or heavy braking—slow down.
- Black ice forms in shaded spots, blending with the road.
- Ice patches are usually < 6m — if you skid, stay calm and avoid braking. Steer gently.
- After a crash, assess whether it's safer to stay in or exit the vehicle.

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators: ☐
2. Place on-site notice board or in file: ☐

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

