

Top Tips for Safe Winter Driving



Keeping your car well maintained is important throughout the year but especially in the Winter months. The long dark nights and poor weather can make driving hazardous so remember to carry out monthly safety checks on your vehicle, take extra care when you drive and adapt your driving to suit the conditions.

CHECK IT OUT

These are simple checks that you should carry out on your vehicle at least once a month:



Tyres

It's vital to regularly check tread depth and tyre pressures. Always check your tyre pressures when they're cold.



Fluid levels

Check your oil level and keep it topped up, but don't overfill it. Also check coolant and brake fluid levels and arrange for a top-up through your local garage.



Windscreen

Keep the washer fluid topped up and check the wiper blades, replacing them as necessary.



Lights

Make sure your front and rear lights and indicators are working properly.

OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD DO IN WINTER



Run it

Car batteries face a severe test in Winter because of the extra demands of running heating fans and lights. Short journeys can put extra strain on the battery so try to plan a longer run occasionally and consider switching off energy sapping equipment.



Clean it

Make sure you keep your car clean, especially the lights and windscreen. Plus make sure you clear your windscreen before you drive away.



Service it

Make sure your car is regularly serviced in-line with the manufacturer's recommended service intervals, this can be found in your vehicle handbook.



Pack it

Take some emergency kit with you in case you encounter trouble. We recommend:

- Mobile phone (charged)
- De-icer
- Ice scraper
- Torch
- Warm clothes and blanket
- Food and water
- Boots or suitable footwear
- First-aid kit
- Battery jump leads
- Warning triangle if available
- Spade (to dig your car out of snow)

SAFER WAYS TO DRIVE WHEN THE WEATHER IS BAD

It's really important that you immediately adjust your driving to suit the weather conditions.



Snow or ice

It can take up to ten times longer to stop when the roads are icy.

Avoid sudden braking, sharp turns, or sudden increases in speed.

If you encounter black ice, don't brake quickly or make any sudden steering movements but do ease off the accelerator and go slowly.



Rain

It can take up to twice as long to stop when the roads are wet compared to when they are dry.

If you begin to lose traction or 'aquaplane', take your foot off the accelerator and slow down - don't brake hard.

Spray can make it hard to see; slow down and keep your distance from other vehicles.



Floods

Don't try to cross floods if the water seems deep. If you have to go through a flood, drive slowly in first gear to avoid stalling the engine.

Avoid the deepest water, which is usually near the kerb.

Once you have driven through a flood, test your brakes. Only drive on at your usual speed if the brakes are working well.



Fog

Drive slowly and use dipped headlights / fog lights so that other vehicles can see you.

Don't drive too close behind another vehicle.

AND FINALLY

- Add useful telephone numbers to your mobile phone. For example, your breakdown provider or emergency contacts.
- Take extra care when the clocks change, you may not be used to driving in the dark. Be particularly careful to look out for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Minimise distractions and never use your mobile phone whilst driving.
- Make sure you're fit to drive. Never drink and drive or take medication that impacts your driving. Get your eyes checked and don't drive if you are tired.
- Leave extra space around you: thinking space, braking space and maneuvering space.