

# Winter Driving



## Staying safe this winter

Try to avoid driving in freezing road conditions unless you really have to. If you do have to venture into the frosty weather, spend some time planning your route and checking if there are any problems such as traffic, incidents or weather issues, before you travel.

### Ensure your vehicle is well maintained

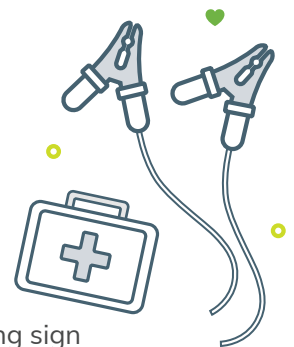
- Make sure all exterior lights are working properly
- Windscreen wiper blades should be in good condition
- Check oil, coolant and washer fluid levels
- Check the condition of your tyres and ensure they are at the correct pressure and depth (1.6mm is the legal minimum but 4mm is the recommended depth)
- Make sure you have enough screen wash and the concentration is right for cold conditions.



### What should I have in the car?

It's best to ensure you've got everything you need **before you set off**. Here's what we think you could need:

- Ice scraper
- Torch and spare batteries
- Warm clothes and blankets
- Winter boots
- First aid kit
- Jump leads
- Shovel and reflective warning sign
- Road maps (in the event of no GPS signal)
- Sunglasses
- Mobile phone charging bank (that is fully charged).



### What to do if your vehicle breaks down

- Make sure you have **breakdown cover** and keep the number of your provider **stored in your mobile phone**. Call them as soon as you can
- Make sure you have a **reflective jacket, torch and warm waterproof clothes in the vehicle**
- Always **exit the vehicle** through the **doors on the left hand side** and if there's a safety barrier stand behind it – it's important to **stay well away from moving traffic**
- Don't try to make repairs yourself, **wait for a rescue vehicle**.



### Top tip

Check the **RAC Traffic Information** and **Highway Agency Traffic Information** for regular updates.

### More useful information

#### Winter driving advice

[www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/winter-driving/](http://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/winter-driving/)

<https://www.lv.com/car-insurance/the-key-fears-for-drivers-in-winter-and-how-to-beat-them>

<https://www.lv.com/breakdown-cover/three-ways-to-avoid-a-winter-breakdown>



## Driving in the dark

Road casualty statistics show that **40% of collisions occur in the hours of darkness.**

- Check that your **front and rear lights** are working
- In urban areas and when you spot an oncoming car, **use a dipped beam.** You can use full beam on all other roads, and should definitely use them on unlit, country roads – but make sure you switch back to dipped beam when you see another car so you don't dazzle them
- **Never drive** if you are **too tired**
- **Travel slower at night** – it's important that you have enough time to see the unknown and react accordingly
- Watch out for **vulnerable road users**, such as **pedestrians and cyclists** who may not be wearing appropriate reflective gear
- Make sure your **windows are clean** because dirty glass increases glare from other vehicles and is also more likely to steam up.

## Fog

- Visibility during fog is reduced significantly, so drivers must **reduce their speed to avoid accidents**
- **Always switch on fog lights**
- Before setting off you should make sure that **all exterior lights are in good working order**, especially fog lights
- Lighting and heating use a lot more fuel than normal, so if you're heading off on a long journey, make sure your **fuel tank is full**
- Headlights must be used when visibility is less than 100 metres.

## Snow & Ice

- Tyres should have **adequate tread** - poor tyres will not grip. Towards the winter period it's a good idea to change your tyres to a deeper tread
- After snowfall, **more time should be spent** in the morning to clear your vehicle windows, mirrors and roof
- A **screen wash** should protect down to temperatures of -35 preventing water from freezing
- **Never use hot or boiling water to defrost the outside of a vehicle.** This can crack the glass. A de-icer, and a scraper is always recommended
- Leave up to **ten times the recommended gap** between you and the vehicle in front during icy conditions
- Whilst driving consider using a **higher gear** or any winter driving assisted controls that your vehicle may have
- During snow and ice, vehicle controls should be used **slowly and smoothly**
- **Steer gently into a skid** if it happens. Don't apply your brakes sharply and keep control of the vehicle by keeping both hands on the steering wheel.

