

Safe Driving Tips

Play your part

Despite everyone's best efforts, there is no guarantee that roads will always be completely free of snow and ice. Although forecasting systems have improved, unexpected weather changes still occur. In adverse weather, difficult and dangerous driving conditions should be anticipated. The following advice is given for those driving during the winter months and especially during periods of severe weather:

Make sure you can see

- Ensure your windscreen and all windows are clear and unobstructed.
- Windscreen wipers and washers are working effectively.
- Washer bottle is topped up with screen wash suitable for the time of year.
- All lights and indicators are clean and working properly.
- You have a screen scraper and de-icer.

Make sure you can be seen

If visibility is poor during the day due to heavy rain, snow, fog or mist, turn on your headlights so that your vehicle can be seen.

If visibility is seriously reduced, turn on your rear foglights. But remember to turn them off when the visibility improves so as not to dazzle other road users.

Get a grip on the road surface.

In wet and freezing conditions the grip between your tyres and the road is severely reduced.

Make sure your tyres (including the spare) have plenty of tread depth, are in good condition and are inflated to the correct pressure.

Avoid Breakdowns

- Ensure your vehicle is well maintained and serviced for winter conditions.
- The cooling system contains sufficient anti-freeze.
- The battery is in good condition, topped up and fully charged.

Before commencing your journey

- Check the weather forecasts:
- Consider if the journey is necessary:
- Consider alternative routes:
- Allow sufficient time for the journey taking account of the weather conditions.

During your journey

- Watch your speed. Drive with regard to the road conditions and the speed limit.
- Watch for cold shaded spots and road bridges.
- Be aware that in poor weather conditions it may be difficult to read information on road traffic signs
- Avoid harsh braking and acceleration.
- Travel In the highest gear possible in icy conditions.
- Maintain a safe stopping distance at all times, remembering to increase this in wet or icy conditions.
- Salting vehicles spread salt across the full width of roads. Give space to salt spreaders and to snow ploughs. Do not overtake.
- Watch out for other road users – motorcycles, cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.
- Use dipped headlights in poor visibility.
- Take breaks every 2/3 hours. In adverse conditions driver fatigue can be increased and frequent breaks are required.

Equipment to carry on long journeys

- Mobile phone
- Additional warm clothing
- Torch
- Rug or blanket
- Shovel
- Flask or hot drink or food
- Radio

If stranded

- If your vehicle breaks down, pull as far off the road as possible. Your greatest personal danger at this point is that of being hit by passing vehicles.
- Try to ensure that your vehicle will not block access for emergency vehicles. (Abandoned and stationary vehicles are the main causes of salt spreaders being obstructed).
- Remain with your vehicle unless shelter is nearby.
- Maintain your circulation by moving your body.
- Use the engine to keep warm, unless the exhaust cannot vent in which case switch off the engine.
- Ensure that airway is maintained if snowed over.