



Winter Driving Conditions

Read our guide to help prepare you for winter driving conditions and ensure you drive safely on the roads.

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Winter Driving Conditions

Driving in low visibility on icy or wet roads requires a very different driving style. Below are some simple steps to help ensure your safety when exposed to the different driving hazards.

In low visibility

- When driving in heavy rain, snow or hail, use your dipped headlights and reduce your speed

In winter sun

- Glare from the low winter sun can be dangerous and obscure your vision so make sure you use your visor and keep a pair of sunglasses in your vehicle

Icy or slushy roads

- Remember that it can take ten times longer to stop so drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop
- When accelerating, use the highest gear possible to prevent your wheels from spinning
- Manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration
- To brake without locking your wheels, use a low gear earlier than normal so your engine will smoothly reduce your speed and use your brake pedal gently
- If you do start to skid, ease off the accelerator and do not brake suddenly



Foggy conditions

- Expect visibility to deteriorate rapidly as fog drifts quickly and is often patchy
- Drive very slowly and use your dipped headlights
- Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves
- Don't hang on to the tail lights of the vehicle in front, as you may well be driving too close
- Don't speed up suddenly, even if it seems to be clearing, as you can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog

Wet Weather conditions

- Stopping distances will be at least doubled as your tyres have less grip on the wet road, so leave more distance between you and the vehicle in front to increase your ability to see, plan ahead and brake
- If your steering becomes unresponsive, the water may be preventing your tyres from gripping the road, so ease off your accelerator and slow down gradually
- The rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen, so increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front and use your dipped headlights

Flooded roads

- If the water seems too deep, find another route instead of risking breakdown by attempting to cross it
- Remember to test your brakes when you are through the flood before you drive at normal speed

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Allow extra time for your journey, and sufficient time to prepare your vehicle for your journey.

Before you set off:

- Ensure your vehicle is fully defrosted and all snow removed – snow on the roof of your car is dangerous to you and other road users
- Make sure your lights and mirrors are clean and remove any dirt and ice from them
- Check your wiper blades regularly for damage and replace when necessary
- Clean your number plates and make sure they are fully visible
- Make sure you dry your shoes to avoid your feet slipping on the pedals
- Have warm clothing with you in the car regardless of how short your journey is. Even if you don't wear it whilst driving, you may need it in the event of a breakdown or accident if you are stuck roadside. It's also useful to keep a few snacks in the car as well as water
- Make sure your phone is fully charged before you set off in case you need to call for help
- Plan your journey and try to stick to major roads which are likely to have been treated
- When it's raining or snowing during daylight hours, or sometimes even in light mist or fog, your automatic headlights may not activate as it's not sufficiently dark. However, visibility will be compromised and you need to make sure other drivers can see you. Keep this in mind and manually switch your headlights on if necessary.

Vehicle care:

- Do not leave your wipers in 'auto' when you park your vehicle – you can damage the wiper motor if the blades are frozen to the screen and activated
- Look after your vehicle battery – turn off lights, heated windows, wipers, etc, before trying to start the engine
- If you drive an electric vehicle, pre-condition it whilst it is plugged in to avoid drawing too heavily on the battery when you are driving
- If you don't use your vehicle often, make a plan to simply drive round the block regularly to keep your battery charged
- If the car doesn't start first time, try again in short bursts, 30 seconds apart
- Make sure your anti-freeze is topped up
- Keep an ice scraper, de-icer, torch and first aid kit **in the vehicle** – your de-icer is no use at home when you need to defrost the vehicle at work!



REMINDER: Always allow other vehicles more room to allow for you or them skidding or aquaplaning.