



WINTER DRIVING ADVICE AND VEHICLE CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE FOR FROSTY MORNINGS

The British winter is unpredictable. Bad weather can strike suddenly so the best advice when severe weather hits is to stay off the road. If you must drive, make sure you are prepared for the conditions.

When temperatures plummet, resulting in heavy frost and icy patches on roads, ice, fog, tiredness, lack of concentration and unusual journey patterns, are all factors that can possibly lead to a collision.

Protect yourself, others and your vehicle(s) this winter.

Police are asking motorists to drive safely, within the law, and follow the winter driving advice below.

Plan your journey during wintry weather conditions

- Ask yourself - is your journey absolutely essential?
- Clear your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a windscreen scraper and de-icer.
- Vehicle conditions in winter; it is even more important to check your vehicle is well maintained and serviced.
- Always keep the lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from ice, snow and condensation – it is illegal to drive with obscured vision.
- Keep your battery fully charged.
- Make sure you have sufficient fuel for your journey. Keep the fuel tank topped up.
- Add anti-freeze to the radiator and winter additive to the windscreen washer bottle(s).
- Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order.
- Keep windscreen washer fluid topped up as windscreens quickly become dirty from traffic spray and salt on the roads.

- Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth and are maintained at the correct pressure.
- Keep a torch and spare batteries in your glove box.
- If the weather deteriorates are you equipped to deal with a breakdown and equipped to deal with the cold/adverse weather? Wear comfortable shoes, keep warm clothing (wearing layers is a great way to keep warm), a blanket and sensible footwear (boots/Wellington boots) in the car in case you get stuck or need to get out. Carry a thermos flask and high-energy snacks, such as chocolate, so you can have a hot drink and something to eat.
- If your vehicles breaks down and you have to leave your car to get help, make sure you wait a safe distance away from the vehicle.
- Take a mobile telephone with you and make sure it is fully charged. Carry a mobile charger in the car. Remember do not use your mobile phone whilst driving. Pull over, stop the engine and remove keys from the ignition before using your mobile.
- Always drive within the speed limit and don't rush or take risks - it is better to be late than never to arrive at all.

Adjust your driving to the conditions

- Hail, snow and rain reduce visibility.
- Use dipped headlights and reduce your speed.
- In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road.
- Remember, when temperatures fail to rise much above freezing point during the day, many roads, particularly in dips or where there are high walls or hedges, will remain covered in frost.
- Never assume that the road has been gritted. Be prepared for some isolated sections of road and certain gradients to remain icy when more exposed sections have thawed. Motorcyclists in particular should be wary of changes in road surface condition.
- Also be aware that different road surfaces react differently to severe weather. Hail, snow and rain all reduce your visibility.
- Drive with extra care, adjusting your driving to the weather conditions; allow extra room/time to slow down and stop.

When roads are icy or slushy

- It can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road. Drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop.
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin.
- Manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration.
- To brake on ice or snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use the brake pedal gently.
- If you start to skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.

- Drive with extra caution on cold frosty days even along roads you use everyday and think you know well. There may be a patch of water that has iced over or an unexpected covering of frost.

Watch out for fog

- Watch out for fog/banks of fog - it drifts rapidly and is often patchy.
- In foggy conditions, drive very slowly using dipped headlights.
- Use fog-lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves to avoid on-coming drivers from being dazzled.
- Don't hang on to the tail-lights of the vehicle in front. This gives you a false sense of security and means you may be driving too close.
- Don't speed up suddenly, even if it seems to be clearing. You can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog.

Winter sun

- Dazzle/glare from winter sun can be dangerous. Keep a pair of sunglasses to hand so as to avoid any dazzle/glare from the sun as it can appear instantly without warning.

Salting vehicles

- Salting vehicles travel at speeds of up to 40mph spreading salt across all lanes of the carriageway. Drivers are advised to maintain a safe distance behind them. Do not attempt to overtake. Take care when traveling behind winter service vehicles.

Snow ploughing

- Snow ploughing can throw up irregular amounts of snow that may be a hazard to vehicles. Drivers are advised to maintain a safe distance behind vehicles and do not attempt to overtake. Drivers of vehicles such as salt spreaders and snow ploughs take all reasonable precautions to protect other road users from harm. Take care around winter maintenance vehicles.

Floods/Surface Water

- If you can avoid it, it's best not to drive through lying surface water as you might flood your engine. The deepest water is usually nearest the kerb.
- To avoid the risk of flooding your engine and/or becoming stranded, try and find an alternative route and avoid driving through the flooded

area. If in doubt don't drive through the flooded area, **yours and others safety is most important.**

- If you do have to drive through flooded roads, use first gear. Move forward immediately to avoid stalling the engine. Keep your revs high and depress your clutch when you need to.
- Test your brakes after passing through the water. If they work then you can drive on at your usual speed providing it's safe to do so.
- To increase visibility, keep well back from the vehicle in front (due to traffic spray). If steering becomes unresponsive, it may mean water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually. If you start to skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.

Know your vehicles capabilities; don't attempt to drive through deep water and risk getting stuck.

Protect yourself, others and your vehicle(s) this winter.

For more road safety advice please visit the government's website:
www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

PROTECT YOUR FROST COVERED VEHICLES FROM OPPORTUNIST THIEVES

Warwickshire Police would like to remind motorists not to leave their vehicles with the keys in the ignition while the vehicles defrost. Thieves are known to target residential areas on cold and frosty mornings looking for cars where the owner has started the engine to defrost the windscreen and then returned inside, leaving the car unattended.

- If you have a garage, always put the car away at night. This not only keeps the car frost-free but also out of sight of would be car thieves.
- Always remove keys from the ignition, even if you are leaving your car, just to open a garage door. It only takes a thief a few seconds to jump in and drive away.
- Cover your windscreen the night before a frost is forecast. This will shorten the amount of time it takes to clear the windscreen.
- Ensure you have the required de-icing materials available.
- Stay with your car while it is defrosting. You may even consider taking a cup of tea out with you while you wait.
- Make sure you allow yourself longer in the morning to get ready if frost or snow has been forecast the night before.
- Motorists should also be aware that some motor insurance policies become invalid, or the cover reduced, if a car is stolen as a result of keys being left in the ignition.

Following this advice will help protect yourself, your vehicle(s) and others from harm on our roads this winter.