



Safer Business Driver Club

Winter Driving Tips

Now you've completed one of our advanced driving courses you should be a much safer and lower risk driver. However, each season brings its own driving challenges and even the most experienced drivers need reminding of what could lie in store. Of all the seasons, winter requires the most care and preparation if you're to stay safe. Breakdowns and collisions are more common and road conditions can be treacherous and change quickly. Here are some of our tips for safe and trouble-free winter driving.

OUR TOP TEN TIPS FOR DRIVING IN SNOW AND ICE

- 1 Gentle manoeuvres are the key to safe driving – stopping distances are 10 times longer in ice and snow.
- 2 Pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel spin. If you get into a skid, remember to take your foot off the pedals and steer.
- 3 Stay in a higher gear for better control. If it is slippery, in a manual car you can move off in a higher gear rather than just using first gear.
- 4 When driving in snow get your speed right – not too fast so that you risk losing control, but not so slow that you risk losing momentum when you need it. Brake, steer and accelerate as smoothly as possible.
- 5 Slow down and accelerate on the straight and just steer around bends. Only use the brakes if you cannot steer out of trouble. If you must use them, apply gently.
- 6 Going uphill: If you can, avoid having to stop part way up the hill. Keep a constant speed, choosing the most suitable gear well in advance to avoid having to change down on the hill.
- 7 Going downhill: Reduce your speed before the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid using the brakes. Leave as much room as possible between you and the car in front.
- 8 If your vehicle has ABS / ESP it will not give the same control in very slippery conditions – do not rely on it as it can't do anything that the tyres won't.
- 9 Automatic transmission: In slippery, snowy conditions it is best to select '2' rather than 'Drive'. This limits gear changes and makes you less reliant on the brakes. Some automatics have a 'Winter' mode which locks out first gear to reduce the risk of wheel spin. Check the handbook.
- 10 If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels. Put a sack or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip (part of our recommended Winter Driving Kit – see below). Once on the move again, try not to stop until you reach firmer ground.

Prepare a **Winter Driving Kit**. This should include:
A torch, blanket, warm coat, hat and gloves, boots or wellingtons, hot drink in a flask and high energy bars/nuts, fully charged mobile phone and portable charger, road atlas, first aid kit, high-vis vest, jump leads, hazard warning triangle, de-icing equipment, tow rope, shovel and old carpet/cat litter to put under tyres if you get stuck.



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Winter Car Care

BEFORE YOU GO

In icy weather, get up at least 10 minutes earlier to prepare your car. Clear all windows using a scraper and de-icer. If you have a frozen lock use a cigarette lighter to warm the key or a quick dab of hand sanitiser also works. Put a squirt of WD40 into your locks to prevent freezing.

Plan your route. Major roads are more likely to have been cleared and gritted. Allow extra time for winter journeys and be prepared for delays.

BATTERY AND ELECTRICS

Lights, heaters and wipers put high demands on the car batteries. If your driving is mainly dark rush-hour trips, the battery will take heavy wear and if more than 2 years old may let you down.

- Should your car stand idle on weekends then a regular overnight trickle charge is a good idea to give the battery a chance to revive.
- Turn off non-essential electrical loads like lights, rear screen heater and wipers before trying to start the engine.
- Use the starter in short five-second bursts if the engine doesn't start quickly, leaving thirty seconds between attempts to allow the battery to recover.
- Avoid running electrical systems any longer than necessary – turn the heater fan down and switch the heated rear window off once windows are clear.

TYRES

We recommend Winter/All Season Tyres – these grip better in the wet and in temperatures below 7 degrees.

Roadside recovery companies recommend at least 3mm of tread for winter motoring, and certainly no less than 2mm. Don't reduce tyre pressures to get more grip.

ANTIFREEZE

Antifreeze is essential for engine protection and avoiding costly repairs due to parts damaged by freezing.

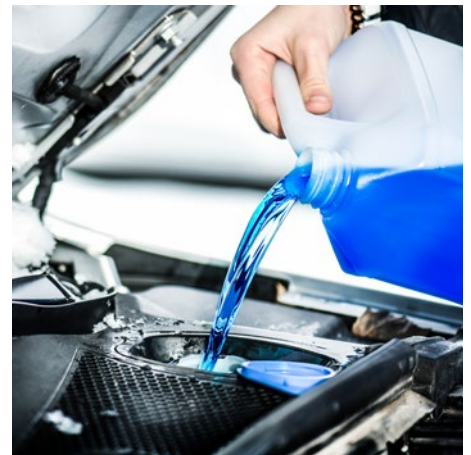
- Most modern cars use long-life antifreeze. Check the handbook or ask a dealer for advice.
- You need a 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water in the cooling system for winter. This gives maximum protection down to -34° centigrade.

Should your car overheat in the winter it's likely that the radiator has frozen, preventing coolant from circulating. Stop straight away to avoid serious damage and allow the radiator to thaw.

VISIBILITY

Make sure that all bulbs are working and that lenses are clean. Headlights must be used when visibility is seriously reduced but remember to switch off any fog lights once visibility improves.

If clearing snow from the car it's important to clear it from lights as well as from the glass and roof. Keep number plates clean and clear too.



Safer Business Driver Club

Having completed your Business Driver Training, you have been automatically enrolled in the **Safer Business Driver Club**.

You are also considered a safer, lower risk driver. As such, we can offer you highly competitive insurance rates and cover*, not only for **Motor and Breakdown insurance** but also for **Home and Travel insurance**. Please contact us on the number below for details.

* Offer applies to insurance in the UK only.

