**Winter Driving Advice From The RAC**

The last few winters in the UK haven’t exactly been conducive to safe, easy driving. Between, the snow, freezing temperatures, wind and driving rain, motorists in the UK have a lot to deal with through the dark months of the year.

But with the correct preparation and some considered planning and forethought there’s no reason why you shouldn’t be able to safely stay on the road this winter.

**Getting your vehicle ready for winter – 5 point plan**

1. Check your **car battery** strength and charge it if necessary, this is even more important if your battery is more than 3 years old.
2. Ensure your **coolant** is between the minimum and maximum markers and that there is sufficient anti-freeze in the coolant.
3. Make sure you have plenty of **tyre tread.** Also look for damage such as splits or bulges and check the pressure.
4. Check your **screenwash** and use one with protection that works down to -35c at dilution one part screenwash to one part water.
5. Test wiper blades for damage and replace if necessary.

RAC have more information and videos on how to [prepare your vehicle for winter driving](http://www.rac.co.uk/advice/winter-driving.aspx).

**Winter essentials**

In recent years we have seen extreme weather that has blocked roads resulting in drivers spending long periods stuck in their cars. It’s therefore important to carry some extra items in your car should this happen to you.

* A Shovel to help clear ice
* Bottled water
* Snacks – chocolate or cereal bars
* Bits of carpet or thick cardboard to place under driven wheels to help regain traction on ice or snow
* Salt, sand or cat litter – to help clear snow and ice
* Reflective jacket(s)
* de-icer and ice scraper
* Extra screen wash
* Warms clothes and a blanket or sleeping bag for you and your passengers
* Battery jump leads
* Torch with spare batteries
* Tow rope
* Snow chains (if you live in a remote or rural area)

**Planning your journey**

On top of including all the above items in your plans, it’s also important to remember the basics. Even if you’re not embarking on a particularly long journey, tell someone where you are going – it could even be the people you are going to see – what time you’re leaving and when you expect to arrive.

If the weather is really bad consider whether the journey is really necessary.

You can check for live updates as you travel too – but please don’t use your phone while driving.

Visit [RAC Traffic Information](http://www.rac.co.uk/route-planner/) and [Highways Agency Traffic Information](http://www.highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/).

Check the weather on [MetOffice](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/) website.

**Driving tips in snow and ice**

Remember, only drive if it is absolutely necessary and don’t be afraid to turn back if the driving conditions become treacherous.

1. Accelerate slowly using low revs. You might need to move off in second gear to help decrease wheel slip
2. Leave as much as 10 times the normal recommended gap between you are the car in front
3. If you skid, steer into it. eg if the rear of the vehicle is sliding to the left, steer to the left. Don’t take your hands off the steering wheel or stamp on the brakes
4. If the road hasn’t been gritted, be careful when driving in the wheeltracks of other cars as compressed snow can be icy
5. Operate the brakes, steering, brakes and accelerating smoothly and slowly

**Visibility**

If you can’t fully see where you’re going, you’re not safe. It’s tempting to drive off in a rush for work with frost still on the windows and the heater on full, but waiting a few minutes for everything to defrost could help you spot that car at a junction you might otherwise have missed.

It’s about being seen as much as it is being able to see, too. That means ensuring all your lights are clear from frost and in working order.

Window wipers deteriorate over time too – especially when the rubber gets cold and hard, meaning grime is smeared across your windscreen instead of being wiped off. Make sure they’re in good working order and can clean your screen effectively.

For more information and videos on [winter driving visit the RAC](http://www.rac.co.uk/advice/winter-driving.aspx).