

Winter Driving

Bad weather can strike suddenly and, with the unpredictable British winter, you need to ensure you are prepared and drive according to the conditions.

Journey planner

- Check the weather forecast
- Listen to the radio for travel information
- Tell someone what time you expect to arrive
- Clear your windows and mirrors
- Carry a screen scraper and de-icer
- Fully charge your mobile phone

Essential items

- Mobile phone
- Warm clothes
- Blanket
- Food and water
- Shovel
- Anti-freeze
- Washer bottle fluid
- Hazard warning triangle

Vehicle condition

- Keep the lights clean and free from ice and snow
- Keep your battery fully charged
- Add anti-freeze and screen wash
- Check your wipers and lights are in good working order
- Ensure tyres are in good condition and the tread depth is of the legal limit and within policy
- Avoid leaving your vehicle unattended whilst it warms up, this increases the risk of theft and may negatively impact your insurance protection

If you need assistance

- On a motorway, it's best to use a roadside emergency telephone, so that the breakdown/emergency services can locate you. If you have to use a mobile phone, make sure you know your location from the numbers on the marker posts on the side of the hard shoulder
- Abandoned vehicles can hold up rescue vehicles and snow ploughs. To ensure that the road is cleared as quickly as possible, stay with your vehicle until help arrives
- On the motorway, if it's safe and you can get out with any passengers, exit your vehicle via the left-hand door and get behind a safety barrier
- In all instances put on a high visibility jacket
- For winter driving it is best to have several high-vis jackets for any passengers

High winds

- Take care when passing high-sided vehicles in high winds. Give cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians more room than usual as they could be blown around by side winds
- Be aware of gaps between buildings or trees as wind may blow you sideways, especially if you are driving a high-sided vehicle. Position your vehicle to allow space either side in case you do get blown to the side

Snow and ice

- Stopping distances may be up to 10 times greater in the snow and ice so be aware of your speed and look further ahead to anticipate any upcoming hazards
- If you are approaching an incline, let the vehicle in front reach the top before you start to drive up just in case it rolls backwards
- To reduce the risk of skidding on slippery surfaces, you should avoid harsh braking, cornering, and accelerating



Driving electric vehicles in winter

Electric vehicles are less efficient in winter. The lower temperatures slow down your battery's chemical reactions, reducing its performance as well as taking longer for it to charge.

To protect your battery's longevity, your vehicle will reduce the regenerative braking to protect the battery from rapid charge inputs until it is warm. This can reduce your range by between 20-30%. The additional demand from heating, lighting, window wipers and so on will affect the battery's efficiency, meaning your vehicle will cover less miles per charge in colder weather.

Adjust your journey planning and charging stops to take into account that your range will be reduced, and charging may take longer during the winter months.

If your vehicle allows you to pre-condition, heat the seats and steering wheel via the app (heat the person, not the cabin), which uses the ancillary battery and conserves the driving battery. Pre-conditioning whilst the car is still plugged in means the energy used to heat the vehicle will not come from the battery. A warm battery will also run more efficiently. Turning the A/C off and heating with only the fan when driving will also improve range.

The good news is that electric vehicles can behave better in icy conditions, due to the position of the battery being low to the ground. This lowers the vehicle's centre of gravity, improving traction and handling capabilities in snow and ice. When the vehicle does use regenerative braking it can also reduce your chance of skidding.

You can also control your power in hazardous conditions by smooth acceleration. Stability control prevents your wheels from over-spinning, lessening the chance of you losing control.



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The Driver Companion App

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