

# WINTER MOTORING

## Keep yourself safe when the cold begins to bite

**Winter exposes your car to particularly harsh conditions and places unique demands on drivers, making it more important than ever that you keep your car in the best possible condition and prepare yourself for every eventuality.**

- Do regular checks on tyre pressures and condition, brakes and brake lights, and ensure the battery is fully charged. Top up your radiator with anti-freeze to the correct concentration for winter.
- In particular, check your foglights, but be sure to use them only when visibility is poor, because they can dazzle other road users and make your brake lights difficult to see.
- Check your windscreen wipers – it's important they don't smear dirt on the screen. If wipers aren't clearing the screen properly, clean them first, then replace them if that doesn't work. Perished or split wiper blades should also be replaced immediately.
- You'll use far more screenwash than normal because of the spray thrown up by damp, salty roads, so make sure you keep it topped up.
- Check oil levels. Ensure you use the correct engine oil, because cold weather can make it thicken.
- Tune your radio to the latest traffic information – there are more accidents and hold-ups in winter.
- Carry de-icer and a windscreen scraper. Ensure you can see through all windows before driving off.
- Always leave enough time to thoroughly demist the inside of the car. Don't drive off until you have good all-round visibility and the car's blower is expelling hot air, so that mist can't build up again.
- Keep sunglasses in the car – they can help you cope with glare from a low sun, especially if it is being reflected off snow or rain.
- Carry a car phone charger with you, because cold weather will make the battery discharge faster. Programme relevant breakdown service contact numbers into your phone.
- Always carry a waterproof jacket, a high-visibility jacket, warm clothing, gloves, boots and a torch in the car in case you get stuck in treacherous conditions. If it's snowing, put a shovel in the boot.
- Carry a bottle of sealed water and some chocolate in the car in case of emergencies. If you should ever get caught in a long queue in winter, or a snowdrift, these will be important in keeping you hydrated and your blood sugar levels up. These are very important if you're stranded and cold.
- If your car does break down, it is often easier for rescue services to locate you if you use a roadside phone rather than your mobile.
- Carry a warning triangle so that you can warn oncoming traffic of your vehicle's presence.
- Don't abandon your car at the roadside unless you must. It could hinder emergency vehicles.
- Don't wait in your car for help unless conditions demand it. You are far safer outside the vehicle and away from the road. If you need to, wear your high-visibility vest so that other motorists can see you.