



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Driving in snow and ice



Acting to Protect & Save

Driving in snow and ice

Stopping distances can increase ten-fold in the ice and snow, and if you can not see clearly, you can not react to hazards. Driving in bad weather can be lethal, so it is crucial to be prepared.

The following tips can make your journey safer in winter.

Avoid driving

- If possible avoid driving in snow and ice or if bad weather is forecast.
- Consider public transport.
- If you drive to work, try to make arrangements to work from home (particularly if you live in a rural area).



Are you prepared?

Breaking down is never a pleasant experience – especially if you have to wait for recovery in the cold.

- Make sure your vehicle is well-maintained through an up-to-date MOT, regular service, and regular walk-round checks by yourself.
- Check your tyres to make sure they are in good condition and have a tread depth of at least 3mm to be safe in the wet.
- Make sure there is anti-freeze in your radiator and windscreen washer bottle.
- Keep an ice-scraper and de-icer in your vehicle at all times in winter.
- Pack a winter driving kit in case of emergency. This might include: a torch; cloths; a blanket and warm clothes; food and drink; first-aid kit; spade; warning triangle; and high-visibility vest.
- Always take a well-charged phone in case of emergencies, but don't be tempted to use it when driving.

Before you set off

In severe and wintry weather it is even more important to plan your journey. The Highways Agency for example provides the latest traffic situation for England's motorways and major A roads.

Check the weather forecast in advance and plan your journey. In bad weather, major roads are more likely to be cleared and gritted, still allow plenty of time for potential hold-ups. The Met Office provides up to date forecasts, and issues warnings when severe weather is likely.

Clear ice, snow and condensation completely from your windscreen and all windows before setting off. Clear snow off the roof of your vehicle too, as it might fall and obscure your vision during your journey.



Drive with care

If you do get caught in bad weather, follow these steps to minimise the dangers.

- Slow right down and only travel at speeds at which you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.
- Maintain a safe space between you and the vehicle in front, increase it to as much as 10 times as you normally would in good conditions.
- Be extra vigilant for people and hazards.
- Stay in control and avoid harsh braking, accelerating, or sharp steering.
- Take corners very slowly and steer gently and steadily to avoid skidding. Never brake if the vehicle skids, instead, ease off the accelerator and steer slightly into the direction of the skid until you gain control.
- Use lights accordingly – fog lights in foggy conditions, dipped headlights when visibility is reduced.

Updates on the move

Keep listening to the radio for traffic and weather updates. On motorways, look out for overhead message signs where the Highways Agency will flash up important travel messages, including warning you of delays and advising of alternative routes.



For a **free Home Safety Check**

Contact us

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