

# COMMENT “Be prepared for safe winter driving”

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Priscilla Woods, Health, Safety & Security Director at P & O Ferries has always taken a keen interest in safe driving at work. This article covers some of the basics of driving in poor weather.

## Clear your windows of snow, ice, and mist

Don't drive like a tank driver with just a tiny patch of windscreen to see out of. Make sure all your windows are clear of ice, snow, and condensation before you set off.



- Keep the windscreen and other windows clear of dirt and snow to avoid a fine.
- Clear snow from the roof – it can fall onto the windscreen and block your view.



- Air-con demists the screen faster and reduces condensation.
- Replace worn or damaged wiper blades.
- Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the blades freeze to the screen, you could damage the blades or wiper motor when you turn the ignition on.
- Use a suitable additive in your screen wash to reduce the chance of it freezing and dilute properly.



## Make your car visible in poor winter weather

With shorter days and more chance of rain, sleet and snow, there can often be poor visibility when driving in winter.

- Make sure all car lights are working and the lenses are clean.
- If the roads are mucky, you might have to clean your lights after every trip.
- Keep number plates clean, to avoid fines.

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- If you must clear snow, don't forget the lights – front and back.
- You must use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced. If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.



Most modern cars use long-life antifreeze but some types of antifreeze need changing after only 2 years. Make sure you use the right type and check your service schedule.

## Choose the right winter tyres

- At least 3mm of tread for the winter.
- Don't let air out of your tyres to get more grip – it doesn't work, and it's unsafe.
- Think about getting winter tyres or all-season tyres – these are made from a special rubber that gives better grip in cold, wet conditions.



## Top up your antifreeze in cold weather

Antifreeze only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair. You need a 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water for the winter – this protects your engine down to -34C.



## What do you need in your car for winter driving?

There are a few essentials you should keep in your car when you're driving in winter. These will help you deal with ice, snow, and dark winter nights. Here are things to keep in your car:

- Ice scraper
- De-icer Torch and spare batteries
- First aid kit
- You should also keep a fully charged mobile phone and power bank if possible.



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## What should be in a winter car survival kit?

No matter how safely you drive, there's still a chance you could get stuck somewhere in poor weather. Pack a winter emergency kit, just in case. That way you'll be prepared for a long wait in the cold. Here's what to include:

- Warm clothes, waterproofs, and high-vis jackets
- Sturdy footwear
- Hot drinks and snacks
- Shovel
- Jump leads
- Warning triangles



## Don't take risks

There are strict limits on the amount of alcohol allowed in your system to be able to drive.

Even small amounts of alcohol can affect your ability to drive, and there is no fool-proof way to drink and stay within the limit. The advice from the police is clear: avoid alcohol altogether if you plan to drive.

Because there is no way to speed up how long your body takes to process any alcohol in your system, there's no fail-safe way to guarantee all the alcohol you have drunk will be gone by the time you wake up the next day.

**Don't take risks. If you're not sure,  
Don't Drive!**

## Alcohol and driving

December is statistically the worst month for drink driving in the UK every year as people wind down for the festive break.

# Winter Driving Tips



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