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Top Tips for Employees: Staying Safe on the Roads this Winter

Winter Driving – Pre-Journey Check



Before your journey check your vehicle:

- Tyres have a good tread depth and are inflated correctly (including the spare, if carried)
- Windscreen wipers & washers are working properly
- Lights are clean & working
- Vehicle windscreen, windows and mirrors are clean and clear from mist, frost and snow (snow and ice reduce what you can see, and can be dangerous to other road users as it falls off your vehicle)

Dazzle from the low winter sun can be dangerous - carry a pair of sunglasses in the vehicle just in case it's too low for the visor

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Winter Driving – General



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If you must drive in wintry weather:

- Drive according to the conditions – on treated and untreated roads
- Allow more time for your journey
- Reduce speed in poor visibility, where there is snow, or if ice may have formed
- Use the highest gear possible to help keep control of the vehicle, and avoid harsh braking and acceleration
- Maintain larger safer stopping distances – 2 seconds between vehicles is for good conditions. A wet road surface means you'll take twice as long to stop, so you need to be at least 4 seconds behind the vehicle in front.
- Use dipped headlights in poor visibility and snow, so others can see you!
- Use front and rear fog lights in poor visibility, but remember to switch them off when conditions improve.
- Watch out for other road users, including motorbikes, bicycles and pedestrians who may also be having difficulties in the conditions - give them extra room



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Winter Driving – Foggy Conditions



Fog is especially a danger in autumn and winter and is a major cause of collisions. When driving in foggy conditions:

- Slow down, keep your distance and turn your lights on in fog
- Drive very slowly using dipped headlights. Use front and rear fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves
- Don't hang on the tail-lights of the vehicle in front - this gives you a false sense of security and means you may be driving too close
- Don't speed up suddenly - even if it seems to be clearing, you can quickly find yourself back in thick fog

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Winter Driving – Icy & Snowy Conditions



Ice, snow and slush drastically reduce the ability of your tyres to grip the road which means that slowing down, speeding up or changing direction all become hazardous:

- Drive slowly and as smoothly as possible, allowing extra room to slow down and stop (it can take twice as long to stop on a wet road and upto 10 times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road)
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin, manoeuvre gently and avoid harsh braking and acceleration
- To brake on ice and snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use the brake pedal gently
- If you skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly

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Winter Driving – Floods



If you have no alternative but to drive through a flood:

- Drive slowly, use a low gear and try to keep the engine revving at a high rate. Move forward continuously to avoid stalling the engine (for an automatic vehicle – engage and hold in a low gear)
- Avoid the deepest water, which is usually near the kerb
- Do not try to cross floods if the water seems too deep, as water getting into the engine may cause it to fail
- After you have gone through a flood, test your brakes. Only drive on at your usual speed if the brakes are fine

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