

Winter Hints & Tips

Motoring Safety

Be prepared and drive safely this winter season



With winter fast approaching, now is a good time to ready yourself and your vehicle for severe weather, taking some simple steps to prepare for safe winter driving.

Maintenance and Servicing

In the run up to winter, it's now a perfect time to service your vehicle, giving you peace of mind in the knowledge that it has been professionally prepared for the coming months.

Regular maintenance and checks throughout winter are also important, and your winter vehicle maintenance routine should include checks of the following:

- Antifreeze levels – Ensure they are filled to the correct level to avoid freezing
- Door locks – Spraying with WD40 every few days during cold spells can prevent freezing
- Battery – Replace your car battery at the first sign of trouble
- Exhaust system – Ensure system is in good repair; carbon monoxide leaks can be deadly
- Fuel – Keep at least a quarter of a tank in case of unexpected delay
- Heater and defroster – Ensure both are working properly
- Headlights and hazard lights – Replace any faulty light bulbs immediately; ensure they're kept clean
- Oil – Ensure filled to correct level
- Thermostat – Ensure it's working properly
- Windscreens – Clear all windows of snow / ice / dirt
- Windscreen wipers – Repair if damaged and maintain proper washer fluid level
- Number plates – Avoid fines by keeping these clean and legible
- Tyres – Make sure tread is adequate and tyres are inflated properly. If winter tyres are fitted, you may be required to notify your insurer, which you can confirm by referring to your policy documentation.

When customers choose to use winter tyres, Allianz will not require notification and will not charge an additional premium provided the tyres meet and are fitted in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification, and are in a roadworthy condition.

Preparing for your journey

Always be ready for potential adverse weather. When bad weather does arrive, decide if it is actually necessary to drive. If conditions are really bad, is it possible to travel by other means? Can you rearrange your trip or avoid making the journey by using the phone or email?

If it's deemed appropriate and you decide you really must travel:

- Include an extra 10 minutes to prepare your vehicle before you set off
- Clear all windows and roof of snow, ice and dirt
- Give yourself extra time and stick to main roads where possible
- Allow for extended stopping distances on winter road surfaces
- Consider adding weight in the boot of light rear wheel drive vehicles to assist traction control
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to arrive
- Always put your safety first before punctuality in winter conditions
- Always carry your mobile phone, fully charging it before you go
- Listen to local traffic reports and heed advice from your local authority or police federation concerning driving safety

Prepare a **Winter Emergency Kit*** to keep in your vehicle including:

- Ice scraper and de-icer
- Torch and spare batteries - or a wind-up torch
- Warm clothes and blankets - for you and all passengers
- Boots
- First aid kit
- Jump leads
- A shovel
- Road atlas
- Sunglasses (the glare off snow can be dazzling)

* recommended by the Highways agency



What to do if you break down

Having a well-maintained vehicle is the easiest way to avoid breaking down but breakdowns are more common during periods of cold weather and challenging road conditions, particularly snow and ice. In the unfortunate event of a breakdown, always remember – **safety first** – for you, your passengers and other motorists.

- If you can, get your vehicle off the road – as far to the left side of the road as possible.
- Warn other drivers by using your hazard lights, using side lights as well if it is dark or visibility is poor.
- Put on a reflective jacket if you have one.
- If you fear your vehicle may be struck, get out of the car if safe to do so and move well away from the traffic. If on a motorway, it is advisable to exit the vehicle by the passenger door and ensure all passengers do the same.
- Do not allow anyone to stand in front of your vehicle or between your vehicle and oncoming traffic.
- If on a motorway, keep clear from the carriageway and hard shoulder. It is best to retreat up the bank or behind a barrier if this is possible.
- Once in a safe place, use your mobile phone or other available phone to call breakdown or other emergency service.
- Never attempt to cross a motorway carriageway, instead follow arrows on the posts at the back of the hard shoulder. This will direct you to a free phone that connects directly to the police / Highways Agency.
- Be prepared to describe your vehicle, the problem you are having, your location and direction of travel. Motorway telephones and marker posts will include reference numbers of your location.
- When your vehicle is repaired, take care when returning to the road, using the hard shoulder as an acceleration lane if on the motorway.

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