

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER DRIVING

Driving in wintry conditions can be risky, so it's best to be prepared for it.

This month we've teamed up with fleet funding company Alphabet to bring you some advice on how to get you and your car ready for winter driving and what to do should you get stuck in the snow.

Tyres

Ensure your tyres are inflated correctly and that you have sufficient tread on your tyres to cope with wet and slippery conditions.

Battery

In winter, the battery will run down quicker. Make sure you do a regular long journey to top it up.

Engine

Modern engines are more robust than older ones. All the same, depress the clutch when starting the vehicle as this will reduce drag on the engine and preserve the battery.

Screenwash

Keep this topped up and use an additive at the right concentration to prevent it freezing.

Fuel

Keep your tank topped up - that way if you are caught out, you'll have enough fuel to make it home or run the engine to keep warm. However, it's essential to keep snow from blocking the exhaust as noxious fumes can leak into the vehicle.

Windows

Clear all snow and ice from the windscreen before driving. Do not use water to de-ice windscreens. Hot water can crack the glass, and the water will only freeze again on the screen or on the ground where you are standing.

Locks

A squirt of WD-40 will prevent your door locks freezing up.

Warm clothing

Your car may be warm on the inside but if you have to step outside, you could be in trouble if you haven't got warm clothing with you.

Snow kit

Always pack the following: ice scraper, warm coat, hat, gloves, sturdy boots, a blanket to keep you warm if you get stuck. Take some food, water and a hot drink if you can. Always carry a fully charged mobile and some old bits of carpet, or cat litter, to put under the tyres if they get stuck and a shovel to clear the snow.



And what to do if you get stuck in the snow...

First of all, make sure you have packed your emergency snow kit. If you are trapped in your car, you can stay warm by running the engine. However, it is vital that the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow. If the engine fumes cannot escape, you could be overwhelmed by carbon monoxide gas, which is highly toxic.

If there is any risk the fumes could enter the car, do not run the engine. Even if it is safe, do not run the engine for more than 10 or 15 minutes in each hour.

Stay in or close to your car. In heavy snow it is easy to get disorientated and lost, or separated from your vehicle. If necessary you can always hang a piece of brightly coloured cloth to your car to let others know you are there.