

Winter Driving Tips

Top tips to keep you safe in
all weather conditions

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The do's and don'ts of driving in winter

As the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, it's time to think about preparing you and your vehicle for winter driving.

Dealing with dark and frosty mornings, rain, snow, and the low winter sun, can all make driving extremely challenging.

To help you prepare, we've developed a quick guide full of tips, checks and essential kit to make sure you're ready for whatever the season has in store.

Winter driving tips with Novuna

Do



Carry a pair of sunglasses

One of the most challenging parts of winter driving is low winter sun. It can hit the windscreen or reflect off wet roads, dazzling you and making it almost impossible to see. Carry a pair of sunglasses so that you don't get caught out.

Consider if the journey is necessary

If the weather conditions are really bad, think about your journey and if it's absolutely necessary. If you can put it off to another time, consider staying at home, where it's warm and safe.

Take extra care and allow additional time

If you're driving in poor weather, take your time, slow down and make sure you keep a close eye on the road and traffic in front of you. It's sensible to avoid large puddles or floods - dips in the road can be hidden and, if the water is deep, it could damage your vehicle.

Keep your distance

Stopping distances in rain, snow, and on ice can be massively increased - in rain this can double, and in snow and ice, it can take ten times longer to stop.

Don't



Drive too fast

Keep your speed down to make sure you have time to react. In snow, make sure you accelerate gently, try to use low revs and move to a higher gear as quickly as possible. If you're driving an EV, remember that they generally accelerate faster than a traditional vehicle, so it's even more important not to be too heavy on the pedal.

Brake suddenly

Try not to brake suddenly, as this could lock your wheels and cause a skid. Try to brake gently when coming up to a junction and accelerate as smoothly as possible when pulling away.

Use your fog lights unless they're needed

Your fog lights should only be used if the visibility is less than 100m, which is about the length of a football pitch. If the fog lifts, make sure you turn them off as they can be a distraction to other road users.

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Winter vehicle checks

Glass

Keeping the windscreen clean and clear isn't just crucial for safety, it's a legal requirement. Check it regularly for chips and cracks and make sure you use a good screenwash to avoid frozen washer jets.

In snow or heavy frost, take a little extra time before your journey to clear all the windows, lights, roof, and number plate.

Make sure you have some de-icer or an ice scraper and don't use hot water as it could cause cracks.

Don't leave your vehicle running unattended as this may invalidate your insurance.

Breakdown cover

Make sure you've got breakdown cover and check the details carefully. For example, does it provide assistance at your home address?

Tyres

Check your tyres regularly and before you set out on a long journey. Don't just top up the pressure, make sure you do a visual check of the tread to look for cuts or bulges — and don't forget the spare tyre if you have one.

The minimum legal tread depth in the UK is 1.6mm, but experts suggest changing them before they reach that level. You can check if they're near the legal limit by feeling for a notch built into the main tread groove — your tread should be higher up than this notch.

Fuel

Ensure you have more than enough fuel in your tank for the journey you plan to make. This will ensure you can keep the heating on if you are stuck in the snow or long traffic queues.

Wipers

Check your front and rear wipers for damage or splitting and replace them if necessary. Before setting out, make sure they are clear of frost.

Battery

Batteries have to work extra hard in the cold weather and are more likely to fail. If possible, inspect your battery and top it up with distilled water if necessary, or take it to a service centre who will often check it for free as part of a winter health check.

Servicing

Regular servicing is a vital part of vehicle health and a contractual obligation for leased vehicles. If you're due a service, consider getting it booked in before the weather gets too bad. Lots of companies now offer free winter health checks where they check tyres, brakes, and batteries.

Lights (front, back, sides)

Remember to check and clean your lights weekly and before any long journeys. Make sure they're clean, free of damage and cracks, and that all bulbs are working properly.



Essential winter driving kit

Keeping an emergency kit in your vehicle, especially if you're going on a long journey, will keep you warm if you break down or help you get moving again if you get stuck.

1 Mobile phone

Always carry a charger and keep your mobile topped up so that you can call for help if it's required.

2 Ice scraper and de-icer

Ensure you have a window scraper and some de-icer in the vehicle.

3 Blanket

The temperature can drop very quickly when the engine is not running, so always keep enough blankets for everyone in the vehicle to use.

4 High visibility vest and warning triangle

Whether you are stuck on a country lane or a motorway hard-shoulder, you must ensure other drivers can easily see you and your vehicle.

5 Torch

A good torch could be the difference between staying stuck and finding the fault and getting on your way.

6 Shovel

Just in case you need to dig yourself out of mud, snow or ice.

7 First-aid kit

Make sure you have a well stocked first-aid kit with all the basics to deal with minor injuries.

8 Tow rope

You never know when a passing motorist might be able to help out, but only if you have one of these.

9 Tyre pump

Imagine turning the despair of finding a flat spare tyre into the sheer relief of knowing it can be pumped up to save you from being stranded.

10 Maps

Carry a map in your vehicle, even if you have a SatNav device or smartphone — just in case you lose mobile signal or run out of power.

11 Spare bulbs

These could get you out of trouble, but make sure you can fit them yourself; otherwise they are simply extra fragile baggage.

12 Jump leads

Just like a tow rope, having these with you could mean a passing motorist can help you on your way.

13 Warm drinks and a snack

If you end up stuck, you'll be glad you stashed those chocolate bars in the glove box.

14 Handbook and locking wheel nuts

Make sure you have the manufacturer's manual/handbook and locking wheel nuts in the vehicle.

15 Warm clothes and wellington boots

This might seem like overkill, but if you have to leave the vehicle, your clothes get wet, or you need to turn the heater off to save fuel, you'll be glad of the extra layers. Equally, you may be able to help someone else.

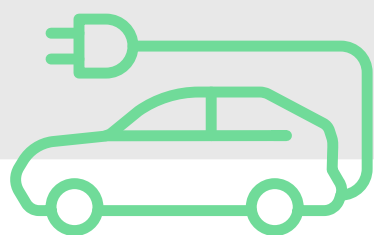
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Even when the temperature falls below zero, your electric vehicle will start up without any problems. However, the cold weather can have an impact on charging speeds and battery performance.

Here are a few quick tips to help you get the most out of your EV this winter.

Range and charging speeds

Low temperatures slow down the chemical reactions that absorb and release electricity. This means that charging can take a little longer and range is slightly reduced. Although some models mitigate the impact of cold weather through temperature regulation systems, it's a good idea to keep the vehicle plugged in when not in use. That said, with typical ranges now well over 200 miles, there's no real need to worry about how far you'll be able to drive this winter.



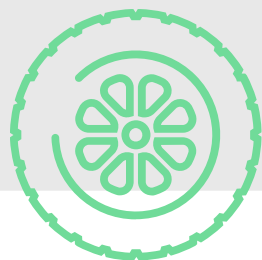
Minimise energy consumption

Keeping your tyre pressure at manufacturer recommended levels, driving at moderate speeds, and avoiding sudden acceleration or excessive braking, can all help optimise your vehicle's driving range. Limiting the use of temperature control systems and making use of any range efficient modes can also help conserve energy.



Gripping the road

Electric vehicles are typically heavier than comparative petrol or diesel models. A good set of winter tyres* can help you grip the road in icy conditions but, as with any type of vehicle, it's important to drive slower in adverse weather conditions to give yourself more time to take evasive action if and when necessary.



Winter tips for electric vehicles

**Not all policies include cover for tyre replacement or seasonal tyre changes. To avoid any uncertainty, please refer to your policy documents to confirm whether this service is available to you.*



Any questions?

For more driving and vehicle maintenance tips, visit:

NovunaVehicleSolutions.co.uk/news-and-insights

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