



Severe weather driving tips

Stay safe on the roads. Tips for driving through rain, wind, fog, snow and ice.



Severe weather driving



What you need to know

When the weather turns bad, the general advice from the Met Office is to stay home, but sometimes that isn't an option.



The highest number of severe accidents occur between November and February.

How to stay safe:

Being ready before you leave is one of the best ways to keep yourself and others safe in extreme weather conditions. Here are some simple ways to make sure you're as prepared as possible:



Plan ahead

According to experts at the National Highways Agency, RAC, and Institute of Advanced Motorists, the most important thing to remember is to check the weather forecast and plan ahead.



Stock up on essentials

Blankets, water, a shovel and a torch are must-haves if you have a breakdown in snow or ice. It's better to have them and not need them than to get stranded without them.



Check your tyres

As the temperature drops, you may need to add more air to your tyres. Be sure to check that your tyres are in good condition and ensure they are correctly inflated.



Check your route

If there's ice on your windscreen, the chances are there's ice on the road. Take the opportunity to think about the journey ahead and assess the potential risks.



Driving in heavy rain



What you need to know

During heavy rain, your visibility drops, your braking distance increases, and accidents become more likely.



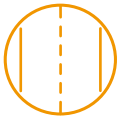
9 out of 10 weather-related fatalities and serious injuries happen in the rain.

How to stay safe:



Slow down

If your wipers are on, then it's time to slow down. Rain makes roads slippery and cuts your reaction time.



Stick to main roads

Smaller roads are more likely to be flooded or blocked by fallen branches and debris, so stick to main roads if you can.



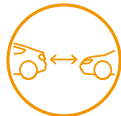
Flooding? Turn around

This one's simple: never drive through flood water. It only takes 12 inches (30cm) of moving water to float your car and take you into deeper water.



Use dipped headlights

If visibility is bad, you want to be able to see and be seen by everyone else, so make sure your lights are on.



Increase following distance

In wet weather, give yourself at least four seconds behind the car in front. It's likely you'll need that extra time to stop.



Sign up for free flood warnings [here](#).

Flooding - don't chance it!

The water might look shallow but it could be hiding all sorts of hazards. Even a small amount of water sucked into your engine can cause major damage.

It's better to turn around and find another route.



Managing high winds



What you need to know

When driving in high winds, it's essential to remain fully alert and focused on the road at all times. Strong winds can be unpredictable.



High winds can be dangerous, especially if you're driving a high-sided vehicle like a van or lorry.

How to stay safe:



Keep a firm grip of the steering wheel

Gusts of wind can throw your vehicle off course, especially in open areas.



Give cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians space

They're also vulnerable to side winds, so leave plenty of room if you're overtaking.



Watch for debris

Fallen branches, litter and even larger objects can be swept onto the road. Be ready to react quickly.



Plan your journey

Research your route before you leave to check for any road closures or fallen trees.



Staying vigilant in fog



What you need to know

Fog is one of the most dangerous conditions you can drive in, so it's important to know how to prepare and react during this type of weather.



The number of crashes on UK roads increases by up to 23% in autumn due to fog and other hazards.

How to stay safe:



Know when to use headlights

Use them if you can't see more than 100 metres ahead. But, don't switch on full beams, as fog reflects light back, making it harder to see.



Open windows at junctions

This makes identifying approaching traffic much easier. If you can't see, listen for oncoming vehicles before moving.



Use your fog lights

If visibility gets bad, turn on your fog lights. Just remember to switch them off again when things clear up. Check you're comfortable with how they operate before setting off.



Prevent window fogging

Use your air conditioning to stop condensation from forming on the inside of your windows. Make sure your heater is set to windscreen demisting and open all the vents.



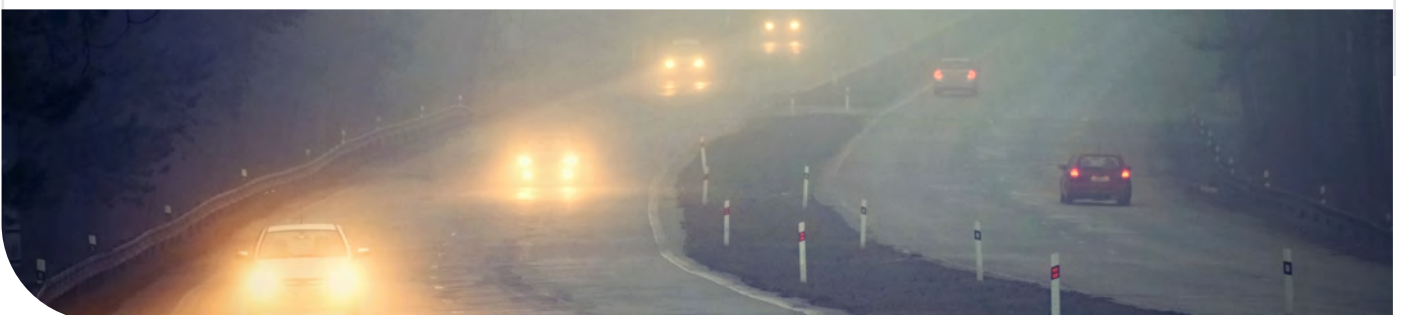
Keep your distance

Stick to the two-second rule and keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front.



Is your journey necessary?

Fog can get thicker without warning. If visibility gets too low, pull off the road and park.



Keep control in snow and ice

Driving in snow and ice is a completely different challenge. **If you don't have to drive, then don't.**

How to stay safe:

1 Fully clear windows and mirrors

You need visibility when driving, so clear all your windows and mirrors, don't just scrape away the driver's side.

2 Remove snow from your roof

Clear all snow from your roof as it can slide off and block your view when you break.

3 Drive slowly

Snow and ice can make roads slippery and dangerous. Gentle acceleration and deceleration are the best ways to drive.

4 Increase your stopping distance

Ice drastically increases your braking distance, so it's important to leave room to avoid accidents.

5 Avoid sudden movements

In snow or ice, hard braking or sharp steering can cause your wheels to lock up, making you skid.

6 Use low gears

Staying in lower gears gives you more control over your speed and braking.

7 Stick to main roads

They're more likely to be salted and cleared, giving you a better chance of staying in control of your vehicle.

8 Be cautious at junctions

Road markings might not be visible, and increased braking distance means that vehicles might not stop in time.

Be cautious of winter service vehicles!

When you see a snowplough or gritter, stay back. These slow-moving vehicles (around 40mph) throw salt and spray, which can damage your car.

Overtaking is risky, as snow and ice may still be ahead.

Find out more

You can find out more about the dangers of driving in snow and ice or find more tips about driving in snow from the **RAC** [here](#).



Make the right choice

Driving in severe weather is about smart decisions. If you don't need to be on the road, avoid the risk.

Give National Highways and local teams space to clear the roads. If driving is necessary, prepare, stay alert and respect the conditions.

