

## **Road Safety in hazardous conditions**

### **Motoring Advice during snow and icy conditions**

For further information Visit the [Road Safety Authority](#) website

- Is your journey absolutely necessary?
- Can you use public transport – during these severe weather conditions public transport routes will be prioritised.
- If you must use the car, before you begin your journey consider the following:
  - Put a Hi-viz jacket, shovel, boots or wellingtons, extra clothing or a blanket and a flask in the boot of the car, (in case you do get stuck or must abandon the car).
  - Check your tyres – pressure, tread depth (minimum 1.6mm) and condition.
  - Ensure ALL your windows are clean and free from snow; bring a scraper and de-icer with you. Snow left on the roof will become loose and can drop onto the windscreen during braking, thereby causing sudden and severe restriction to your vision.
  - Check your lights and indicators as falling snow reduces visibility.
  - Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged.
  - If your car has rear wheel drive the addition of extra weight in the boot (e.g. a bag of sand/cement etc) will help your wheels to grip.

### **During your journey remember the following:**

- It takes longer to stop a vehicle in snow or on icy roads so slow down and allow extra distance between you and the vehicle in front.
- Keep a sharp lookout for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.
- Keep your windows clear of snow during your journey.
- Manoeuvre gently; avoid harsh braking, acceleration or steering as these can induce a skid.
- Use the highest gear possible to reduce the engine revs as this will help avoid wheel spin.
- When travelling downhill, especially through a series of bends, select a low gear as early as possible and allow your speed to reduce using the brake pedal gently.
- If your vehicle begins to skid you should:
  - Identify the cause – it is either, too much Braking, too much Steering, too much Acceleration or a combination of these.
  - Remove the cause – GENTLY and SMOOTHLY.
  - If your car has ABS (most modern cars have) it will NOT skid under braking. If ABS is activated, KEEP your foot on the brake and STEER around whatever caused you to brake.
  - If your car does not have ABS and starts to skid on the brakes, firstly take your foot off the brakes then re-apply the brakes gently – if the car continues to slide pump the brake pedal as fast as you can (Cadence Braking) and steer around whatever caused you to brake.
  - If under acceleration, braking or steering, your vehicle skids and slews sideways - turn the steering wheel in the same direction as the rear wheels are skidding (if rear wheels drifting left turn steering wheel to left) until car comes back in line while at the same time easing off the accelerator/brakes.
  - Avoid over correction with too much steering, be ready for a secondary skid in the opposite direction.
- Heavy snowfall will reduce visibility. Use dipped headlights and fog lights if fitted.
- At low air temperatures watch out for black ice, especially in sheltered/shaded areas on roads, under trees and adjacent to high walls.

- Tune in to your local radio station regularly to keep up to date with information on weather/road conditions, road closures etc.

### **Advice to Pedestrians**

- If a journey cannot be avoided be extremely careful as snow and ice can make walking on footpaths very dangerous. Wear sturdy footwear with good gripping soles
- Take an extra look before you cross the road and do not attempt to cross the road if there are vehicles around – remember snow and ice increase the distance that cars need to stop.
- Visibility is reduced in snowy condition so wear high visibility clothing or carry a torch.

### **Advice to Motorcyclists / Cyclists**

- Motorcyclists/Cyclists should consider their safety before using their motorcycles / bicycles in icy/snow conditions. Controlling two wheeled vehicles in snow or icy conditions is extremely difficult and there is an increased danger of a collision with a vehicle that is out of control.
- Consider taking alternative transport or walking.

### **Motoring Tips – Adverse Weather Conditions – Wind and severe flooding**

In addition to the above when there are high winds and or heavy rain drivers should:

- Slow down and increase the distance from the vehicle in front.
- If driving a high sided vehicle be prepared, when approaching exposed sections of roadway, for the impact of the wind on the steering dynamics of the vehicle.
- Avoid overtaking manoeuvres on such exposed sections.
- When passing motorcyclists, cyclists or pedestrians, be prepared for the possibility of the wind blowing them into your path.
- Be alert to the possibility of flying debris.
- Do not drive at speed into floodwater – there may be a pothole or debris concealed in the water.
- Before you drive through deep floodwater ascertain how deep the water is to ensure your vehicle can get through safely.
- Remember if you travel at speed into floodwater your vehicle may aquaplane leading to loss of control.
- Slow down when near pedestrians or cyclists ... avoid spraying them.
- In driving rain when visibility is poor drivers should use dipped headlights and keep a sharp lookout for pedestrians, cyclists etc.

### **Motoring Tips – Adverse Weather Conditions – Fog**

In foggy conditions drivers should:

- Slow down and increase the distance from the vehicle in front.
- Use dipped headlights and front and rear fog lights, if fitted. Remember to switch off fog lights when visibility improves.
- Keep a sharp lookout for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.
- If you must stop for any reason use your hazard warning lights to warn other drivers.
- Do not blindly follow the vehicle in front – it may leave the road for whatever reason.