How to stay safe whilst driving in snow or during icey conditions by Mark Davison

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Prepare

If you think there might be snow then wake up early and make sure your car is ready and safe to drive:

1. Use an ice scraper or deicer to remove clean all windows to ensure you have maximum visibility

2. Clear the roof of your car of snow. If not the snow may suddenly cover your windscreen whilst you are driving

3. Remove any ice or snow from your head lights so that other motorists can see you

4. Bring an emergency kit in case you end up stranded in the snow. This should include a torch, first aid kit, tow rope, a blanket, thick coat and boots, jump leads, snow shovels, warning triangle and rags or sacks

5. It is also advisable to bring a pair of snow chains or snow socks to stop you from slipping and to keep you from getting stuck in the snow

6. Wear comfortable, dry shoes â€“ Slippery snow covered boots are not suitable for driving in

Driving

â€¢ Keep your lights on to improve visibility to other road users.

â€¢ If your car is parked in a snow covered area then apply your snow socks / snow chains before you start your journey, remember though to take them off once the road becomes clear again.

â€¢ Choose second gear when pulling away, slowly ease your foot off the clutch to prevent your wheels spinning.

â€¢ Use a low gear when driving, especially on inclines or hills.

â€¢ Drive slowly and give yourself plenty space to stop - You should allow for at least 3x more breaking distance than normal.

â€¢ Brake lightly to prevent skidding - If you feel your tyres locking up then ease off the brake.

â€¢ When driving downhill, use third or fourth gear, this will help you avoid skidding.

â€¢ If your vehicle skids, press down on the clutch and turn the steering wheel towards the direction of the skid. Once your car straightens up steer gently back along the course of the road. When skidding, don't break! Your wheels will just lock up and you will continue to skid.

â€¢ If you get stuck, straighten up your wheels, use your snow shovel to clear the snow from in front of the driving wheels and if you have not already then apply your snow socks / snow chains. If you do not have snow chains or socks then put a rag or sack underneath your tyres to help your tyres grip. Do not stop your car again until you reach firm ground.

Driving an Automatic car

o For driving on gritted or clear roads use â€˜Driveâ€™ and let the car adjust the gears for you

o Once the roads become treacherous drop it into â€˜2â€™ which will improve traction and reduce your need for the brakes

o Many newer cars have a Winter/Snow mode, which is designed to give you more traction and reduce wheel spin.

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