

Toolbox Talk

Winter Driving – Driving in Adverse Condition

BBLP Clocktober Campaign 2022

Winter is a more dangerous time to drive; the wet conditions and darkness during most people's commute to and from home is the main reason why we have significantly higher accidents recorded. The annual October clock change heralds an increase of around 20 road crashes per day where someone is hurt, according to new research. The number of road traffic accidents occurring between 5pm and 8pm also increases.

The majority of accidents involve young, inexperienced drivers who may be driving in dark conditions on slippery roads for the first time; however, all drivers, regardless of experience, should refresh their knowledge on how to drive in winter conditions to ensure that everyone gets home safely.

Dark Conditions

- Keep windows clean to avoid increased glare and condensation, improving visibility.
- Familiarise yourself with all light controls in the car.
- Dip your headlights when faced with another road user to avoid dazzling them.
- Consider turning your headlights on during the hour after sunrise and hour before sunset to help other drivers see you during twilight periods.
- Consider dimming dashboard lights if possible, to reduce reflections and distractions.
- Be vigilant around pedestrians, particularly by shops, pubs and restaurants.

Wet Conditions

- Keep well back from the vehicle in front to decrease loss of visibility from spray. Remember that stopping distance at least doubles in wet conditions.
- If steering becomes unresponsive, ease off the accelerator and gradually slow down (**do not brake**).
- Be aware of the dangers of spilt diesel and the effect it has on surface grip.
- Access bodies of standing water carefully. If you are not sure of the depth, then don't go through.

Snowy/Icy Conditions

- Firstly, avoid driving in snowy/icy conditions unless it is essential. Check the weather forecast before travelling and let someone know where you are going.
- Keep an emergency kit with de-icer, ice scraper, torch, warm clothing and a shovel in your boot; you may also wish to pack food and drinks. Keep your phone charged.
- Before setting off, ensure all windows and lights are completely clear, and all mirrors and windows are demisted. Remove any excess snow that may fall into the path of other road users.
- Drive with extreme care: keep well back from other road users as stopping distances can increase by ten times in icy conditions.
- Pull away in second gear and drive at a slow speed in as high a gear as suitable. Brake progressively and very gently. Avoid any sudden actions and braking while turning corners.