

Care for your Car - Getting Ready for Winter

Winter is well and truly here. The nights have drawn in, the temperature has dropped and there's plenty of rain – with the added danger of snow and ice. If we add low, bright winter sun into the equation, it's no wonder that there are more road accidents during this time of the year in comparison to any other. In fact, on average there are over 6,000 more accidents during the winter months than the summer.

Here at Baileys Driving School, I emphasise that the best way to avoid harm on the road is through a safe and conscientious driving style. This is even relevant when you're not behind the wheel. If you prepare yourself and your vehicle correctly, then you can minimise the risks of travelling during the winter months.

To help bring together some of the more important tips, I've compiled a short checklist of things to look at, to make sure you and your car are winter ready:

- Antifreeze – This is poured into the part of the engine where you may have been told to put coolant. Don't be confused though, as coolant is made up of a mixture of antifreeze and water. The level of this should be checked regularly to prevent water freezing in your engine, expanding, and causing a lot of damage.



- Battery – Without a doubt, batteries are the main cause of breakdowns during the winter. In general, batteries that are older than 5 years tend to have difficulties in the cold. A garage will be able to check your battery and let you know if it's time for a replacement.



- Fuel – It is never a good idea to run your tank down to empty in any month, but during the winter especially I advise keeping a minimum of a quarter tank, just in case there are any delays you hadn't accounted for.



- Lights – These have two important functions, both to see and to be seen. With the shorter days, you'll be travelling in the dark much more, so it is important to check your lights work and that they are clean.



- Tyres – The tread of your tyre is what grips you to the road. Did you know that 48% of winter accidents are a result of skidding? You should have at least 3mm of tread on your tyres to help reduce this danger. Every two weeks you should also check your tyre pressure. When the temperature falls below 7°C, the tread compound used in standard tyres can get harder, resulting in less grip. For increased safety there is also the option of using winter tyres.



- Long journeys – If you're travelling a long way, it's a good idea to take a warm drink, some food, warm waterproof clothes and a blanket, just in case you break down.
- Snow – If you live in an area that gets heavy snowfall, then a spade can be essential to dig out your tyres and vehicle.



Feel free to print out our checklist through the link below, to make sure that you always have the information to make sure you're safe this winter and enjoy your time on the road.