

# Energy UK Guide to: Winter Safety

A guide to staying healthy and safe during Winter



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# Introduction

As the nights draw in and the weather changes it's important to continue to focus on our personal safety

This may mean taking extra precautions to ensure our safety is not compromised

The following guide has been produced to provide some information you may want to consider

Going about your day to day business can become hazardous in Autumn and Winter; not only with inclement weather conditions, but also shorter daylight hours, resulting in being more susceptible to risk without realising it

Research shows we record more driving incidents during the Autumn and Winter months. It also highlights that a greater number of incidents occur in the morning

We all have a responsibility for our own safety and we should take extra care during adverse weather conditions

Read on to see some examples of what to look out for and what you can do...



# Inclement weather



*Don't get caught out by the inclement weather - these conditions can increase the risk of injury when you travel and walk around*

## Fact 1

Sturdy shoes with good grip are essential in poor weather conditions

## Fact 2

Driver fatigue contributes to 20% of road accidents and 25% of fatal and serious accidents

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

## Fact 3

Having a clean windscreen reduces the effects of the sun's glare

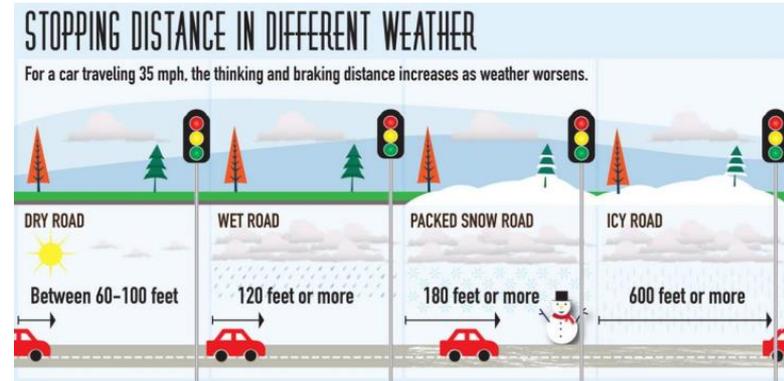
## Slips, Trips & Falls

- Wear appropriate footwear and always check your footwear is clear of debris and replace them if worn. Consider attaching grips or spikes to your shoes in snow and ice
- Allow extra time to get to your destination – stay focussed on what's underfoot and choose your route carefully
- Always look where you're going and avoid being distracted from devices such as mobile phones



## Safe commute

- Adapt your driving style to your conditions – allow at least double the gap in wet and wintry weather and accelerate and brake smoothly to help maintain grip
- Reduce your speed – in 2016 speeding was identified as a contributory factor in **24%** of fatal crashes in the UK \*
- Glare from low sun can make driving dangerous, especially in the mornings and evenings – be aware that other road users may not be able to see you
- Take regular breaks from continuous driving \*
- Consider reflective clothing when walking and carrying a torch when walking



\*[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

# Need to travel

*Good planning and application of control measures can help reduce the risk of injury when travelling*



## Fact 1

Road Traffic Incidents are higher in the Winter months across the Energy Industry

[www.energy-uk.org.uk](http://www.energy-uk.org.uk)

## Fact 2

'Winter strength' screen wash protects to -35 °C when undiluted

## Fact 3

45% of people admitted to driving with at least one vehicle defect

[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

## Extreme weather & company policy

- Is your journey necessary? Can you travel at a better time or rearrange your journey altogether?
- Know your company's policy on travelling in extreme weather conditions

## Planning journeys

- Have warm clothes, food, water and any necessary medication with you, and ensure you have an emergency kit (including a torch) when driving
- Check the forecast before you go
- Have you planned extra time and regular breaks for your journey?

## Vehicle pre-checks

- We are all legally responsible for the safe maintenance of our vehicle, so regularly check yours
- Your brakes and steering are adversely affected by under or over inflated tyres. Check pressure regularly including signs of wear and damage and replace as appropriate
- The legal minimum tread depth is **1.6mm** but you may wish to replace sooner to give better grip. Your company may also replace company tyres at a higher minimum depth

**D** Do you really need to make the journey?

**R** Route: have you planned ahead?  
Are weather and conditions okay?

**I** Individual: are you fit to drive?  
Are you managing your driving hours?

**V** Vehicle: have you checked tyres, fluid levels, fuel, lights?

**E** Emergency: are you and your vehicle prepared?

# Temperature

*Speak to your Manager or medical advisor if you're suffering ill health and seek their help and support*



## Fact 1

You may be at risk from hypothermia in cold conditions if clothing does not provide enough insulation

## Fact 2

Negative effects of cold weather start to occur at moderate outdoor temperatures of 4-8 °C

## Fact 3

The coldest temperature ever recorded during a UK winter was -27.2 °C recorded in Braemar, a village in the Scottish Highlands

## Maintaining your core body temperature

- Wear lots of thin layers made from cotton, wool or fleece for maintaining body heat
- Wear gloves and a hat covering your ears and sturdy footwear will keep out the wind and cold
- Food is a vital source of energy and helps keep your body warm - exercise can keep you warm in winter and helps encourage good circulation
- If your work means you are fairly sedentary try to move at least once an hour

## Health effects

Cold & flu are common health effects suffered in winter, but a few other health problems are increased;

- **Hypothermia**- a dangerous drop in body temperature below 35C (95F). Normal body temperature is around 37C (98.6F). It can be serious if not treated quickly. You should call 999 if you notice signs of hypothermia such as shivering, cold and pale skin, slurred speech, fast breathing, tiredness & confusion.
- **Heart attacks** - more common in winter; your heart has to work harder to maintain body heat when it's cold
- **Raynaud's syndrome** - a common condition that makes your extremities (fingers and toes) change colour and become very painful in cold weather
- **Arthritis** - joints can become more painful and stiff in winter; daily exercise such as swimming is ideal as it's easy on the joints and can boost your mental and physical state

# Emergency arrangements



*Consider what special arrangements are needed for emergencies associated with Winter travel*

## Fact 1

Winter tyres are made from special rubber that gives better grip in cold, wet conditions

## Fact 2

Local road gritting can be requested via the Directgov website

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## Fact 3

Adjust the settings of your mobile phone to extend the battery life

## Vehicle provisions

- Bad weather, accidents, vehicle breakdowns – you never know what might be around the next corner. So it makes good sense to keep provisions such as an emergency kit in your boot
- Recommended contents include: \*Warning triangle, ice scraper and de-icer, torch, warm reflective clothes, blanket, pair of boots, first-aid kit, and shovel – in case you get stuck in the snow

## Company policy awareness

- Are you aware of what you should do in an emergency? If not, check your company's policy to ensure you understand and follow it – this is especially important for 'lone workers'
- It's good practice to notify someone where you are going and your estimated time of arrival

## Mobile phones

- Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged and keep an emergency charger with you
- Turn down the brightness of your mobile phone and **turn off vibrate** to extend your battery life

If you get stranded, **DON'T PANIC!** Stay with your vehicle if safe to do so and call the emergency services on your mobile phone \*\*

\*[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

\*\*[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

# Responsibility



*Being in breach of your duties under the Health and Safety At Work etc. Act (1974) means you are liable to pay a fine or conviction and may also be dismissed from employment*

## Fact 1

Employees have a responsibility to be mentally and physically fit for work

## Fact 2

Drivers are responsible for ensuring vehicle tyres are legal, regardless if privately owned or a company car

## Fact 3

Employees have a duty to adhere to company processes and procedures

## Ownership of behaviour

Your responsibilities as an employee under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974):

- Take care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions
- Co-operate with employers and co-workers to help meet their legal requirements e.g. follow company processes to keep you safe and free from harm
- Do not misuse any equipment that is provided for safety purposes – if you are given it, use it!

## Moral duty

- We have a moral duty when at work to act with integrity, honesty and transparency to ensure we all remain safe
- Reporting – always report accidents, defective equipment or unsafe conditions
- What would you do if you felt that a colleague is not 'fit for work'?

## Behavioural safety

- Behaviours and actions are influenced through culture, attitudes and perceptions
- Do you act differently if nobody is around, e.g. taking short cuts or using your phone when on the move?
- Strong safety culture means 'doing the right thing when nobody is looking'
- **Be responsible and make the right decisions. Don't cut corners, if you can't do a job safely, don't do it. Always think 'Safety First'**

Responsibility starts with ME

# External references and other useful links

Topics	Websites	Website addresses
Wellbeing	MIND	<a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/</a>
Wellbeing	NHS	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/</a>
Wellbeing	WHO	<a href="https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/">https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/</a>
Wellbeing	British Heart Foundation	<a href="https://www.bhf.org.uk/">https://www.bhf.org.uk/</a>
Inclement weather	RoSPA	<a href="https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/fatigue/policy-statements/">https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/fatigue/policy-statements/</a>
Inclement weather	BRAKE	<a href="https://www.brake.org.uk/">https://www.brake.org.uk/</a>
Need to travel	BRAKE	<a href="https://www.brake.org.uk/">https://www.brake.org.uk/</a>
Temperature	NHS	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/10-winter-illnesses/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/10-winter-illnesses/</a>
Emergency Arrangements	Highways Agency	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england</a>
Emergency Arrangements	RoSPA	<a href="https://www.rospa.com">https://www.rospa.com</a>
Responsibility	HSE	<a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/responsibilities.htm">https://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/responsibilities.htm</a>
Responsibility	Legislation.gov	<a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents</a>