

A photograph of a dark-colored car driving away on a two-lane road covered in snow. The road has dark tire tracks. The surrounding landscape is hazy and foggy, with bare trees visible on the right side. The sky is a uniform, overcast grey.

DRIVING SAFELY

IN THE WINTER

AN EBOOK BY CHILL.IE

Driving safely is a must all year round, but of all the seasons, it's especially important to drive with the utmost care and attention during the winter. The combination of adverse weather conditions and long, dark nights makes hitting the roads potentially more dangerous, so it's crucial that you take extra precautions when you're behind the wheel during the chilly season. To help you stay safe on the highways, the team here at chill.ie have put together some winter driving and vehicle maintenance tips. We've also included some revealing statistics based on our latest survey of Irish motorists.

STEERING TOWARDS TROUBLE

In our recent survey, we questioned 750 Irish motorists about their habits and attitudes when it comes to driving at this time of year. Shockingly, 15% of those polled revealed they have been involved in a car accident on Irish roads during the winter.

It's not only the harsh weather that can increase

people's chances of experiencing an accident. Our survey revealed that some people spend more time on the roads during the colder months. For example, 14% of respondents said they spend one to two more hours a week behind the wheel in winter than they do in summer. This could further raise the likelihood that they have a driving-related mishap.

What's more, nearly a quarter

(22%) of those surveyed said they accrued up to €500 in vehicle damage costs in the last five years, while 12% had built up nearly double this amount and an unlucky 7% of drivers ended up forking out between €1000 and €2500.

Aside from footing expensive repair bills, 14% of respondents said they have had to take time off work due to an accident on the roads.



DRIVING SAFELY:

HINTS AND TIPS

Despite the risks, not all of us are being as careful as we should be. According to our survey results, 21% of those polled admitted to not taking extra precautions when driving during the chilly season. The truth is, it's easier than you may think to adapt your habits on the roads when the weather takes a turn for the worse. To stay safe regardless of the forecast, here are a few hints and tips.





SNOW AND ICE

- **Avoid braking suddenly.** Instead, reduce your speed smoothly and gradually.
- **Drive significantly slower** than normal to reduce your chances of skidding.
- Make sure you **approach bends and corners with extra care.**
- If you lose control, **don't panic.** Take your foot off the accelerator, making sure your wheels are positioned in the direction you want to go in.
- To **avoid wheel-spin**, pull away in second gear and ease your foot off the clutch.

FOG

- **Avoid driving** in foggy conditions unless it's absolutely necessary.
- **Switch on your headlights** and fog lamps to help with visibility.
- **Don't be tempted to 'hang on' to the car in front.** You may get too close to brake safely.

RAIN

- Stopping distances increase when roads are wet, so make sure you **leave double the gap** between you and the vehicle in front compared to what you would normally do in dry conditions.
- Always **use your wipers and headlights** to help improve your vision.
- **Slow down** before driving through large puddles.

CARING FOR YOUR CAR IN WINTER

As a motorist, it's your responsibility to care of your car and ensure it's safe to drive on the roads. During the winter, there are some extra checks you can carry out to ensure you're not posing a risk to yourself or other drivers.





TYRES

Making sure your car is fitted with roadworthy tyres is an absolute must. It's particularly important to check that your wheels are in tiptop condition in the winter months when the roads tend to be much more slippery. Your tyres should be fully compatible with your vehicle and be in generally good condition. More specifically, they should be inflated to the level recommended by the manufacturer, and they must meet the legal minimum tread depth of 1.6mm throughout.

In some parts of mainland Europe, it's a legal requirement for drivers to have two sets of tyres - these are most commonly referred to as 'summer' and 'winter' tyres. Even though this isn't required by law in Ireland, swapping your tyres for winter versions during the colder months could help you stay safe. However, our survey revealed that over half (54%) of Irish drivers don't bother replacing their tyres with the change of seasons.



WINDSCREEN

Between the rain, sleet and snow, driving in winter means your visibility can be significantly reduced, so it's crucial that your windscreen is clean and clear at all times. You should regularly wipe your screen on the inside and out, and it's a good idea to replace your wiper blades if they're particularly worn.

You should also try to keep your washer fluid levels topped up. Add a good quality winter additive to stop your screenwash from freezing.



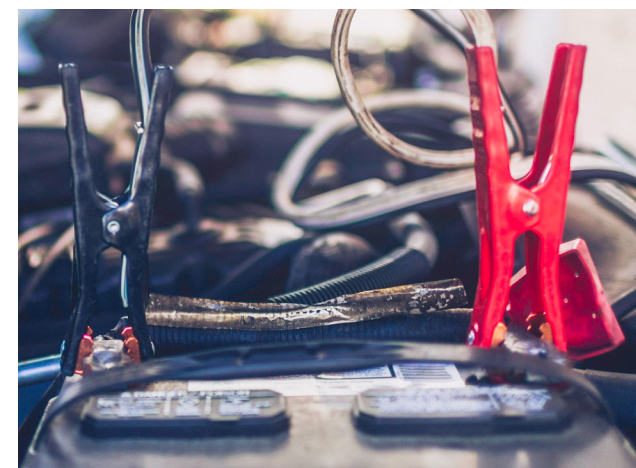
LOCKS AND DOOR SEALS

In dropping temperatures, it's not unusual for locks and door seals to freeze shut. However, there are a couple of things you could do to avoid this unwanted hassle. A top tip is to coat your rubber door seals with a thin layer of Vaseline and apply a squirt of WD-40 inside your locks. This should help you get in and out of your car with ease.



LIGHTS

Being able to see and being seen clearly by other motorists on the road is a must, especially during the winter when it's darker outside. You should check and clean your car lights on a regular basis, and carry spare bulbs with you just in case.



BATTERY

Since a faulty battery is the most common cause of winter breakdowns, it's essential that you make sure yours is in full working order. If your battery is more than five years old, it may struggle to work in cold temperatures. So, to avoid the inconvenience, you should get yours checked and replaced if necessary.



PREPARING FOR A



WINTER ADVENTURE

Being well prepared for your car journeys is essential all year round. However, it's especially important to make sure you're ready to hit the roads during the winter months. To help you prep for any adventures you may embark on this chilly season, here are some suggestions you can put into action before you get behind the wheel.



MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH FUEL

It can be easy to set off on a big journey without stopping to check if you have enough fuel in the tank first. Even though it's more than likely that you'll pass petrol stations on your travels, there's no harm in being fully prepared for the drive ahead. By filling up beforehand, you'll be able to drive for longer without needing to stop to refuel. What's more, having a full tank could help you out should you encounter any delays or if you're rerouted due to the bad weather.

PLAN YOUR ROUTE

Even if you reckon you know where you're going, it's important that you take the time to plan your route. For example, when bad weather hits, country lanes can become extremely dangerous, so why not stick to main roads and motorways instead? It's also a good idea to check the local weather forecast for the areas you will be driving through. Since the weather can change suddenly, be prepared to alter your plans if conditions on your route worsen.

PACK AN EMERGENCY KIT

Unfortunately, it's not always possible to foresee a breakdown. With that in mind, it pays to pack an emergency kit in case you find yourself in a sticky roadside situation. In your kit, you should include a pair of jump leads, a torch, spare fuses, an ice scraper, a de-icer and some dispersant spray, as well as bottles of water, snacks, a pair of gloves, a scarf and a warm blanket. These 'just in case' essentials could prove extremely useful if you're unexpectedly caught out in the cold.



THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to read our eBook.
We hope it helps you stay safe on the roads this winter.

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INSURANCE
WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE