



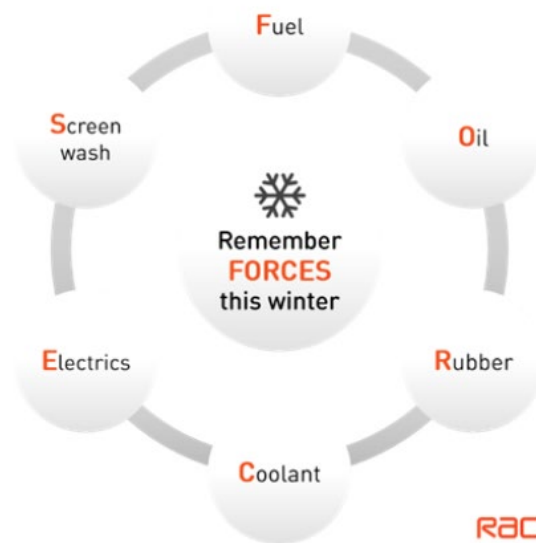
## 6 simple checks to prepare your vehicle for winter

---

With busy lives, it's sometimes difficult to find time to make preparations, but checking your car is ready for winter is a really important job to do.

Breakdowns or accidents caused by unsafe tyres will be at minimum an inconvenience, and at worst could be deadly. Make sure you're one step ahead of cold and snowy winter weather by doing a few simple checks on your vehicle today.

The RAC recommends using the acronym 'FORCES' to remember the simple winter checks:



### 1. F – Fuel

It may sound obvious but ensure you have enough fuel for your journey – it is a good idea to fill-up before setting off. Cars use more fuel in heavy traffic and start/stop conditions which can be regular occurrences, especially in wintry weather. And if the weather changes and it takes longer than you expect you could encounter problems.



## 2. O – Oil

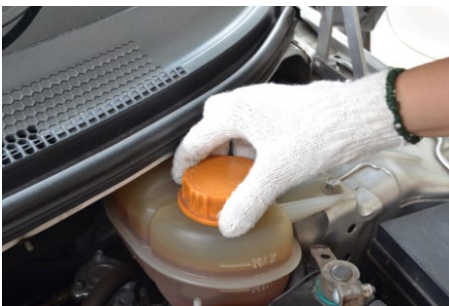
Check your oil level using the dip stick and top-up if necessary – check your handbook if you are unfamiliar with how to do this and to ensure you use the correct oil. Locate the oil cap with the oil can symbol on it and pour in the right amount. Make sure you replace the cap fully and be careful not to overfill as this can cause more problems.



## 3. R– Rubber

**Check your tyre tread depth and air pressure** - Well-maintained tyres are vital to give you traction and grip on icy, wet surfaces. Your car's recommended tyre pressure can be found either in your car's manual or inside the driver's door. The legal tyre tread depth for cars in the UK and Europe is 1.6mm. Check your tyre tread depth using either a tyre gauge, the marker bars on your tyre or a 20 pence coin. If you can't see the outer band of the 20p your tyres are within the legal limit.

**Check your wiper blades** - Your windscreen can get very dirty from rain, snow, ice and road salt. Maintaining good visibility is imperative so regularly check your wipers for splits, and remember, it's recommended to change them every 12 months.



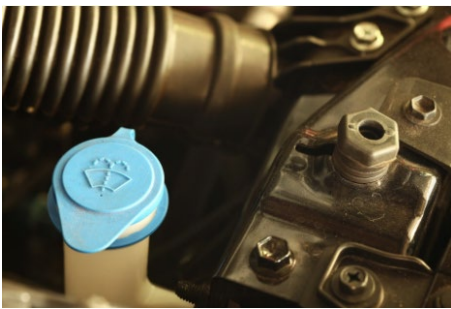
## 4. C – Coolant

Coolant (a mixture of water and antifreeze) is pumped around your engine to cool it. You should regularly check your engine coolant level and top-up if required. Remember only check this when the engine is cool otherwise you risk scalding yourself. It's not normal for coolant levels to drop suddenly, so if it does, get it checked out at a garage. You should find the coolant is between the min/max marks on the side of the tank.



## 5. E – Electrics

Check your lights and indicators are all working properly and replace bulbs or fuses if required. Battery problems are the reason for more RAC call-outs in winter than anything else. Car batteries need replacing every few years (according to usage) so make sure you get yours checked at your car service. RAC has a guide about [checking and maintaining your battery](#).



## 6. S – Screen wash

Make sure you top up your screen wash with a product that is effective down to at least -15 degrees Celsius. This additive helps to keep the windscreen free of ice and dirt, particularly the winter road grime caused by road salting and gritting which can cause visibility issues. There is also the risk of a frozen windscreen which is another reason to ensure you use a proper anti-freeze screen wash.

---

## PREPARE YOURSELF (family / passengers)

- *Wear warm clothing, suitable footwear and a weatherproof jacket.*
- Allow more time for your journey.
- Ensure your mobile telephone is fully-charged - just in case you get into difficulty.
- Consider keeping a blanket in your vehicle.

---

## PREPARE A BASIC WINTER CAR KIT

- Ice scraper and de-icer
- Jump leads
- Reflective warning triangle – ideally two
- Sunglasses
- In-car phone charger – and a portable battery charger
- Blanket

You could also consider a [more substantial winter car kit](#), to be extra safe!

---

## IS IT ILLEGAL TO DRIVE WITH SNOW ON YOUR CAR?

You are required to have a clear view of the road before setting off on any car journey.

Whilst there is no road law that says it is illegal to drive with snow on your car, the Highway Code stipulates that if driving in adverse weather conditions you must, by law, be able to see out of every glass panel in your vehicle.

This is supported by the section 41D of the Road Traffic Act 1988, meaning it is a legal requirement to have a clear view of the road ahead before you set off.

Failure to do so could incur a fine, but more importantly could place your life, the lives of your passengers and the lives of those around you in danger.

This also means ensuring your windscreen is de-iced on the outside and thoroughly demisted on the inside.

---

## USING FOG LIGHTS CORRECTLY

Fog lights need to be used at the right times to combat reduced visibility, otherwise you could be a danger to yourself and other drivers.

**Fog lights should only be used in the fog, when visibility drops below 100 metres (328 feet) which is roughly the length of a football pitch, this is stated by the Highway Code (rule 226).**

**Fog lights are designed for use only in dense fog, falling snow or heavy rain conditions and never during ordinary visibility when they tend to blind the driver of the car in front or approaching from behind. Misusing rear fog lights can make it difficult to see your brake lights.**

If the fog is so severe that you're struggling to see other vehicles, switch on your fog lights. But don't keep switching them off and on again, as this can confuse other drivers.

Not using your fog lights when appropriate could impact upon the safety of yourself and those around you when driving.

If while driving in fog your car is involved in an accident and you weren't using your fog lights, it could invalidate your car insurance.

---

## USING DAY TIME RUNNING LIGHTS CORRECTLY

Daytime running lights (DRLs) are designed to make your vehicle more visible in bright, daytime conditions.

The purpose of DRLs is not to illuminate the view in front of your car. Instead, they make your car more visible to the drivers and pedestrians you're approaching. Consequently, they point forward rather than downward as headlights and fog lights do. DRLs are forward-facing only, unlike headlights, DRLs do not illuminate any lights on the rear of the vehicle.

DRLs come on automatically when you start your engine. Bright enough to be seen clearly in daylight, DRLs are too bright to be used at night when they would cause dazzle. They go off or dim automatically when you switch your headlights on.

Automatic headlights detect brightness outside the vehicle, turning on the headlights when the amount of light picked up by the illuminance sensor drops below a certain level. On rainy and foggy days, the illuminance sensor may not detect a sufficient drop in the amount of light detected to trigger your headlights. If in doubt - put them on yourself! Do not rely on DRLs if the road and weather conditions are compromised in any way.

**DAY TIME RUNNING LIGHTS ARE FORWARD FACING ONLY. IN ORDER FOR THE REAR OF YOUR VEHICLE TO BE VISIBLE IN RAINY OR FOGGY WEATHER DURING DAY LIGHT HOURS, YOU MAY HAVE TO MANUALLY TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS.**

---

### [Safe Winter Driving Presentation](#)

This presentation offers more suggestions for safe winter driving and can be used as a safety moment with your teams - *to reinforce key facts* - as winter approaches.

---

## **ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE ON THE ROADS – STORMS, RAIN & STRONG WIND**

Even moderate rain can reduce your ability to see and be seen. If heavy downpours are expected, avoid starting your journey until it clears.

If you can, **choose main roads**, where you are less likely to be exposed to fallen branches and debris and flooding.

**Strong or sudden gusts of wind** are more likely on open stretches of road, when passing bridges or gaps in hedges, or when overtaking high-sided vehicles. Wind can also blow you off course or blow other vehicles into your path. Maintain enough room either side of your vehicle so you can account for it being blown sideways.

Roads will be more slippery – **Slow down!**

**Keep your eyes on the road at all times.** Spray from other vehicles can suddenly reduce your visibility, affecting other drivers too, so anticipate their actions and be prepared. Also, if you are using your cruise control, it can make it a lot more dangerous as aquaplaning can occur and you will lose control of your vehicle. **It's safest not to use your Cruise Control in wet, snowy or icy conditions.**

**Never attempt to drive through flood water.** If the road is flooded, turn around and find another route. 30cm of water can float your car, potentially taking it to deeper water from which you may need rescuing. Just an egg-cupful of water sucked into your engine will lead to severe damage. Kerbside Standing or Flood water may also contain hidden hazards e.g. **debris and potholes**, which can damage your car's tyres and wheels.

**Give vulnerable road users** - cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians more room than usual. They are more likely to be blown around by side winds – always keep a safe distance.

---

## **SAFE DRIVING MEANS ALCOHOL-FREE DRIVING - ALWAYS!**

**Scotland has a virtually zero tolerance approach to drink driving. You cannot safely drink any alcohol when driving. Alcohol affects everyone differently - One drink can put you over the limit!**

The same drink can create different levels of alcohol for different people. This depends on:

- your weight, age, sex and metabolism (the rate your body uses energy)
- the type of alcohol you drink
- what you've eaten
- medication
- your stress levels

**The only way to be sure you're not over the limit is to avoid drinking any alcohol when driving. But it would be unfair to have a zero limit. There's more than one reason why drivers could have alcohol in their body other than from drinking.**

You could have traces of alcohol in your body even though it's been some time since you've had a drink and there's little alcohol actually left in your body.

You could even consume alcohol without knowing it. Some foods, mouthwash and medications can contain alcohol.

Many things can also affect how quickly your body gets rid of alcohol. This includes weight, age and your sex.

**The limit helps police take action against those drivers who have drunk alcohol which has then impaired their driving.**

The current limit is:

- 22 microgrammes (mcg) of alcohol in 100 ml of breath
- 50 milligrammes (mg) of alcohol in 100ml of blood
- 67 milligrammes (mg) in 100 ml of urine

Everybody processes alcohol in a different way. For example, two people who drink the same pint of beer can show different alcohol levels in the body.

**Drink driving is a criminal offence with serious penalties:**

- **you'll get a minimum 12-month driving ban**
- **you could go to prison for up to 6 months or get a fine of up to £5000 - or both**
- **the offence stays on your licence for 11 years**
- **you might lose your vehicle**

**You will also have to deal with the social stigma of your actions, and perhaps the consequences of an accident or injury. And, all this whilst managing your life without a car, possibly losing your job and the inevitable increase in your insurance premium.**