

Autumn driving tips



With dazzling low sun or thick fog and drizzle, visibility is often an issue during autumn. Meanwhile, with fading light and lowering temperatures, vehicle maintenance is also of primary importance. Follow this guide and stay even safer on the road this autumn.

Visibility

The low sun at this time of year often dazzles and can surprise drivers. A hazy film builds up on the inside surface of windscreens over time. Scratches, abrasions and chips on the outside can intensify the sun's dazzle too.

- **Improve vision by making sure that your windscreen is clean – inside and out**
- **Keep sunglasses in the car, even in winter**
- **Check that the washer reservoir is topped up with a good quality additive**
- **Check and clean windscreen wiper blades**

Wind

Be aware of unexpected winds on exposed roads and bridges. As winds hit your vehicle you may be momentarily forced off course. Particular caution should be taken when overtaking high-sided vehicles.

Puddles and potholes

Stay well back of the vehicle in front; more space means more time to observe potholes and other road surface dangers.

Fog

Avoid using the main headlights beam when behind another driver. You'll dazzle the driver ahead and also cast a shadow onto the oncoming fog.

Also avoid speeding away from a vehicle that is close behind you, or speeding away too fast when fog clears, as it could come back.

- **Make sure that you have any automatic headlights function switched on so your lights turn on as the evenings draw in**
- **Keep your lights on for around an hour before sunrise and an hour before sunset**
- **In the day use dipped headlights, not just running lights or sidelights**
- **Only use fog lamps when visibility is severely reduced**
- **Rear fog lights are bright and can hide your brake lights – turn them off where appropriate**
- **Beware of other drivers (and cyclists) not using their lights**

Autumn car care



Batteries

Battery failure is consistently one of the most common causes of breakdown. The risk of failure increases at this time of year due to how the cold affects batteries. Follow our expert tips to help avoid battery death.

- **A layer of vaseline (or similar) on the terminals can help to keep out moisture**
- **Leaves can gather and block up vents or accumulate water which then has the potential to damage the electrics**
- **Before you start a cold car, switch off everything electrical (heater, lights, wipers, heated seats, etc) and make sure you depress the clutch, if manual**
- **Keep the top of the battery clean and dry and check the terminals from time to time, ensuring they are tight and free from corrosion**
- **If your battery is more than 3 years old, now may be the time to change it before it lets you down unexpectedly**
- **Help preserve your battery by ensuring everything is turned off when you park at the end of the day**



Antifreeze

Not just for winter, antifreeze is important all year round as it contains additives to prevent corrosion and improve summer cooling. It should be checked as part of the regular service schedule.

Your handbook will give details of the correct antifreeze to use for your car – there are different types and mixing them could cause engine damage. If in doubt get a garage to check for you – many offer cheap or even free winter checks at this time of year.



Bulbs/lights

Bulbs should all be checked at least once a week, particularly as nights draw in and mornings darken.

- **Check all bulbs regularly, not forgetting brake lights and number plate lights. The handbook will show you how to change bulbs, though some headlight bulbs may require a visit to the garage. Carry some spare bulbs**
- **It's also worth checking that your headlamps are aimed correctly and you've removed any European deflectors you might have applied for your summer holiday**



Tyres

Check all tyres for condition, pressure and tread depth. Recovery services recommend at least 3mm of tread for winter motoring, so if the treads are getting low think about buying new tyres now before the colder weather sets in.

Winter tyres technology has improved vastly in recent years. These are not just for use in snow and ice but also add to your safety in the wet and perform strongly when the temperature drops below 7 degrees.



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