



News

Communications Unit

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WINTER DRIVING

95 ALIVE – Tips for Safe Driving

95 Alive the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership has put together winter driving advice to help people stay safe during the current severe weather.

For many drivers these will be among the worst conditions they've encountered. Driving in snow and ice can be very different from their usual driving and a few changes in how they approach it could help them reach home safely

The first and most important thing is to ask yourself if you really need to make the journey, if so take the following into account.

- Ensure you have a full tank, fresh anti-freeze and properly inflated spare tyre, wheel wrench and functional jack.
- Check weather and motoring reports
- Do not go out until the snow ploughs and gritting vehicles have had a chance to do their work.
- If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure you know how to handle your car, practice winter driving in a snowy, open car park, so you're familiar with how your car handles.
- Clear all snow and ice from the car.
- Plan your route and be prepared to take more time.
- Tell someone which route you're taking so they can alert the emergency services if you don't arrive.

Gather an emergency kit and keep it in your car. This should include:

- Ice scraper, de-icer
- Gloves & Boots
- Torch, spare batteries
- Warm clothes and a blanket
- First aid kit
- Jump leads
- Food and a warm drink in a thermos
- A shovel
- Bag of salt or cat litter
- Reflective warning sign (triangle)
- Sunglasses – the glare off snow can be dazzling
- Map/compass



The way you drive can make a huge difference -**DRIVING TIPS:**

- Turn on your lights.
- Keep your space and look a long way ahead
- Normally you should leave at least 2 seconds travel between you and the vehicle in front but in winter conditions stay 3 or 4 times normal distances.
- Travel at much lower speeds than feels natural, if it feels ok you are driving too quickly
- Slow down by decelerating rather than braking
- Do everything gently, apply brakes gently, apply accelerator gently, turn the steering wheel gently
- If your tyres are making virtually no noise this could be a sign that you are driving on ice. Do not use cruise control on icy roads
- If you skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly, if you're drifting around a corner under power try declutching and coast.
- If you're going up a slippery hill, use as high a gear as possible with low revs but be careful not to stall. Accelerating once wheels are spinning simply reduces control.
- Don't start off in first gear, try second or third and again use as few revs as possible.
- When you stop or before you start your return journey, check that ice hasn't accumulated under the wheel arches – it can stop the wheels turning into bends and may damage tyres

Even after roads have been treated, driving conditions may remain challenging especially on stretches of road where there's greater risk of side winds or of ice forming. These include places where: -

- There are changes in road elevation or exposure
- Where the road passes under a bridge
- Objects at the side of the road create shade
- There is infrequent traffic
- It's also advisable to slow down gently for corners where the risk of losing control is at its greatest.

If you get stuck

- Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way
- Use a light touch on the accelerator, to ease your car out
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car
- Pour sand, cat litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction
- Try rocking the vehicle. (Check your owner's manual first — it can damage the transmission on some vehicles.) Shift from forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the accelerator until the vehicle gets going



If You Become Stranded...

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation
- To attract attention, hang a brightly coloured cloth from your radio aerial
- Ensure the exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour
- Use the woollen items and blankets to keep warm
- Keep at least one window open slightly to prevent the vehicle becoming sealed shut
- Eat and drink food carried in vehicle.

North Yorkshire County Council's Director for Business and Environmental Services David Bowe, chair of 95 Alive said: "These are severe conditions, and people need to take into account whether they really need to make the journey. If they do then please take into account the information we've put together, this could mean the difference between arriving safely or putting yourself and passengers at risk. Bear in mind conditions can change alarmingly quickly and the most important thing is to be safe."

More Information about safer driving, road safety and road conditions can be found on the 95 Alive website www.roadwise.co.uk or North Yorkshire County Council's website www.northorks.gov.uk.

Notes for editors:

About the 95 Alive Partnership

The 95 Alive York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership is a partnership of local authorities, emergency services and other agencies that have a common interest and duty to reduce the number of people who are killed and injured on the roads of York and North Yorkshire. They have set themselves a target to save an additional 95 lives by the end of 2010. This is over and above the 40 per cent reduction in casualties that is already demanded of them by Government.