Kim’s Tips: Haven’t the foggiest? Take extra care if visibility is poor…

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These tips for motoring in foggy conditions may help you:

1. Consider whether your journey by road is really necessary,

or could be delayed until conditions improve.

2. Keep your screens clear.

If you have to drive, before you set out make sure that your windscreen and all other windows around the car are as free as possible from condensation, inside and out.

The use of a purpose-designed screenwiper pad can help to keep clear the inside surfaces of the glass, as will turning on the heated rear windscreen (also the heater, where fitted, for the front windscreen). In addition, operating the air conditioning system (if your car has one) will help to remove moisture from the air within the vehicle.

Use the blower fan on full power, and with the air aimed at the screen(s) to help clear the condensation (or ice).

The screen wipers (including the rear screen wiper, where fitted) need to be working, usually on a continuous operation setting, or possibly on ‘intermittent’ if the fog is not so thick/persistent.

3. Check and use your lights.

A quick walk around your vehicle, observing lamp operation while an assistant operates the switches, is always wise before you start your journey. Use dipped headlamps for driving in fog; main beam will dazzle as the high beams are reflected back at you, whereas the dipped beams will illuminate the area immediately ahead of the car, and the edges of it.

Make sure that your fog lamps work as designed (they operate in conjunction with your headlamps). Some cars have just one rear fog lamp, others have two, and some have twin front fog lamps too.

When the fog clears, turn your fog lamps OFF!!! Many motorists seem unaware that it is illegal to use fog lamps except in conditions of poor visibility, and indeed the use of fog lamps in conditions of good visibility (such use can dazzle other drivers…) could well incur

the wrath of the law… and result in a hefty fine/licence endorsement.

4. Drive at an appropriate speed.

Many collisions in misty/foggy conditions are the result of speed that is excessive for the conditions – i.e. driving too fast. You should drive at a speed appropriate to the available visibility.

5. Leave plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front.

It can be tempting to closely follow another vehicle in fog, but this can lead to disaster if it stops suddenly/unexpectedly. Drop back, and don't be mesmerised by the fog. This is easy to say but can be difficult to do, especially if you are on a long journey.

6. Keep track of where you are on the road.

Keep the left-hand verge or kerb in sight/mind at all times, and use available road markings as an aid to positioning your car on the road.

Sounds obvious, but if you are able to follow the sight of the left-hand kerb/verge ahead of your vehicle, this is very helpful. So too are any 'central markings' on the road, in the form of white lines, cats' eyes, reflectors, etc. Take special care not to be inadvertently diverted from a safe course when there is a break in the road markings (due to a road junction, house entrance etc.).

Take care out there during the festive season and beyond… Safe motoring!