Winter motoring checks still relevant as bad weather prevails

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Winter can take its toll on your vehicle but straightforward checks will help you.

Uswitch tells us:

(Photograph and all words from Uswitch).

1. How to prepare your car for winter

Get a winter service
A professional winter service ensures key components like brakes, battery, and engine are in top condition.
Switch to winter tyres
Winter tyres provide better grip in cold, wet, and icy conditions, helping improve safety on slippery roads.
Stock up on essentials
Keep an ice scraper, de-icer, and a windscreen cover in your car to make early morning starts easier.

2. Common winter car problems and how to avoid them

Certain issues are more common in winter, but with a little planning, most can be prevented:
Frozen locks
Prevent frozen locks by applying a silicone spray or lock lubricant. If your lock is already frozen, use a de-icer or gently warm the key.
Foggy windscreen
Keep your windscreen clear by using the air conditioning or a demister. Cleaning the glass inside and out also helps reduce fogging.
Worn wiper blades
Winter weather can be harsh on wiper blades. Replace them if they leave streaks or struggle to clear the windscreen.

3. Dos and don’ts for winter car maintenance

Do:

Give your battery some love

Cold weather drains battery life faster. Get it checked if it’s a few years old, or you could end up stranded on a chilly morning.
Keep an eye on your fluids
Winter windscreen washer fluid stops it freezing up when temperatures drop. Don’t forget to check your coolant too—it keeps your engine from overheating or freezing.
Pack an emergency kit
No one expects to break down, but it’s best to be ready. A torch, blanket, jump leads, and a first aid kit can make a big difference.
Check your tyres
Tyres need good grip to handle wet, icy roads. Check the tread depth and pressure regularly, and think about winter tyres if your area gets a lot of snow.

Don’t:
Drive with frosty windows
Driving with limited visibility is dangerous. Use a proper de-icer and scraper, and avoid using hot water—it can crack the glass.
Forget to clean your lights
Mud and grime build up quickly in winter. Clean your lights often so you can see—and be seen—on the road.
Skip regular check-ups
Cold weather can turn minor issues into major problems. Stay ahead by getting your car checked before winter fully kicks in.
Leave your insurance unchecked
If in the unfortunate event you need to make a claim, make sure you know what your car insurance policy covers.

4. How to maintain electric cars in winter

Electric vehicles (EVs) require slightly different care in cold weather:
Precondition the battery
Many EVs offer a preconditioning feature that warms the battery before driving, improving

efficiency and range.
Plan for reduced range
Cold weather can reduce an EV's range by up to 20%. Keep this in mind when planning long journeys.
Charge indoors if possible
Charging in a garage or covered area can help maintain a stable battery temperature.

5. Staying safe during winter breakdowns

Breaking down in winter can be dangerous due to cold weather and poor visibility. Here's how
to stay safe:
Stay visible
Use hazard lights and wear a high-visibility jacket if you need to exit your vehicle.
Stay warm
Keep blankets in the car to stay warm while waiting for assistance.
Know who to call
Ensure you have your breakdown provider's number saved on your phone.

By following these winter car care tips (above), you'll be better prepared for the colder months ahead.

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