

Advice for policyholders

Winter driving

The RAC sees a sharp increase in the volume of breakdowns when the weather turns cold, so it's well worth taking the time to ensure you carry out the right checks on your car. Get ready for driving in cold weather and help stop your car breaking down with these quick checks.

- **Fuel.** Check you have plenty of fuel in your tank for your journey. It may sound obvious but you would be surprised how many people run out of fuel and with temperatures low, you really don't want to get stranded.
- **Oil.** Our patrols check the oil level on every vehicle they attend and surprisingly they find one-in-three are dangerously low on oil. This can cause a breakdown or lead to catastrophic engine damage at worst. You should check your oil level is between the minimum and maximum mark on your car's dipstick and top up if necessary.
- **Rubber.** You'll need to check your tyres and your wiper blades before you set off. Check your tyres for general wear and tear, cracks, splits or bulges, and most importantly, tread depth. Although the minimum tread level is 1.6mm, during winter it's advisable to have 3mm of tread on your tyres to help with traction and grip. Next check your wiper blades. They are not everlasting and will need replacing from time to time, so check them for splits and cracks.
- **Coolant.** Check your car's coolant level. The last thing you need is a frozen engine or for your car to overheat. Although it's a sealed system and shouldn't need to be topped up, you should always double check, especially before a long journey.
- **Electrics.** Check your lights. Walk around your car and make sure all lights are working and that they are free from dirt, grime and snow. With a cold engine, check the battery terminals under the bonnet are clean and tight. If your car struggles to start and the engine 'labours' when you turn the key you should get it checked by a garage. RAC patrols deal with over 400,000 battery-related faults every winter as the cold weather takes its toll on older tired batteries as well as playing havoc with the electrics. Batteries have to work that much harder in cold conditions and they endure greater demand from extra electrical equipment like the lights and the heater.
- **Screen Wash.** Check your screen wash level and top up with a quality screen wash additive or pre-mix which is effective down to at least -15 degrees Celsius.



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