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How to Prepare for Winter Driving Conditions by John Brokencar

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It can be a challenge to keep your car or motorcycle on the road during the coldest time of the year. Low temperatures and weather that causes poor driving conditions can contribute to unexpected break downs or power failures, so it is important to be prepared in case the worst should happen. Below are a few basic steps that drivers and motorcyclists can take to prevent you getting caught out this winter.

The most important thing you can do to protect yourself from inconvenience is take out a breakdown and recovery policy. While it is useful to have car or Motorbike breakdown cover at any time of the year, when it is darker for longer and the temperature is consistently low, this form of insurance becomes priceless, as anyone who has had to wait on the banks lining the motorway for recovery can tell you.

If you should break down, it is wise to keep a kit for such eventualities in the boot of your car or in a backpack or pannier if you ride a motorcycle. A car kit should consist of warm clothing or blankets, a torch and fresh batteries, wellington or walking boots and battery jump leads. For long journeys, it is advisable to take food and a flask of hot drink. It can also prove useful to carry a shovel in your car if snow is forecast and your journey is essential.

Motorcyclists need to be more shrewd with their emergency kit as space is an issue. A torch and spare batteries, high-visibility clothing, high energy food that doesn't take much room (chocolate bars, for example) and carrier bags all have their uses, as do more surprising items such as condoms, cable-ties and tampons. When embarking on long journeys, bikers should always take a note of the distance between service stations, as these can provide cover and a place to warm up with a hot beverage if conditions turn bad during the ride.

Carrying a mobile phone is important for both motorists and motorcyclists, although ensuring that it holds enough charge to last the journey is possibly more important. If possible, motorists should carry a charger that can connect into their car's cigarette lighter or a battery powered charger that they can use even if their car battery has gone flat.

Motorcyclists should also exercise common sense and judgment during winter. Wet road surfaces can be dangerous enough, but when you factor in ice and snow, it may be wiser to seek alternative ways to reach your destination rather than risk your life on treacherous roads.

To ensure peace of mind if your vehicle breaks down this winter, get breakdown cover. To make sure you remain safe and your mode of transport of choice remains operational, consult the weather forecast and check the Highways Agency website before you set off.

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To a compare breakdown cover policies before you buy, visit Breakdown Choices. They operate a comprehensive comparison site, covering everything from roadside assistance to a breakdown recovery.

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