

DRIVING IN WINTER

Easirent Head Office Team

Dec 2015

Preparing the cars

The first thing our branch managers and drivers do every week is check over every single car for any damage or faulty items. Making sure the cars run smoothly and are equipped with essentials for breakdown, flat tyres, snow-ins, etc. We want all our customers to stay safe on the roads this season and by reading our handy guide you'll be covered for everything with plenty of winter-driving knowledge.

Easirent FAQ's

The best way to be prepared is to cover all the possibilities.

Q: Will I need Winter Tyres?

A: Information for existing and potential customers,

Q: What happens if I get stranded during my hire?

A: Timely, helpful, problem solving information.

Got anything to add?

If you have anything to say on our Winter Guide please email us, tweet us or send us a Facebook message. We love to hear how you are coping with the harsh weather conditions, so share your thoughts and you could be helping out another customer!

“It’s not just what’s under the bonnet, it’s what’s in the boot too. Stranded without de-icer or an ice scraper would mean getting stuck waiting for the car to defrost!”

- Easirent Equipment Manager



Photo credit: iStockphoto

In This Guide

- Essential Winter items
- What to do in a breakdown
- Car Care Checks
- Safe Driving Tips
- SNOW - will the weather affect your hire?

TECHNICAL CHECKS FOR US

- **TYRE DEPTH**
We ensure the tyres have plenty of tread (1.6mm across three-quarters of the tyre, all the way round, is the legal minimum)
- **BATTERY**
Test the battery to ensure it's in good, new condition and fully charged
- **OIL**
Check oil levels and ensure to use correct engine oil, because cold weather can cause it to thicken.
- **RADIATOR**
We make sure the radiator is topped up with anti-freeze and check it is the right concentration



Your tyres have the most contact with the cold, keep them healthy.

Car Checks For You

As well as completing your normal [checking-out procedure](#), it is vital you check for the following cold-weather possibilities.

EXTERIOR LIGHTS

Wet, snowy or icy conditions all increase stopping distances. Your head lights, fog lights and brake lights should all be working. If not, notify us immediately to replace them

TYRES

If the tyres look and feel a bit flat, make sure to notify us or if already on hire, to stop at your nearest petrol station to pump them up. The correct tyre pressure can now be found online but will always be in the manual held at the branch, so contact them if in doubt.

SCREENWASH

It is recommended to check the fluid level as you'll be using way more in the winter (due to the ice, spray and salt levels of the road) Also make sure the concentration is higher so it won't freeze.

WIPERS

Check your wiper blades for any splits or worn rubber, we can replace them straight away to ensure you have the highest visibility during rainy days.

FUEL

Keep the fuel level topped up so you can run the car to keep warm if you get stuck in snow and prevent any hard starting of the engine.

LIGHTS

In any car you are unfamiliar with, be sure to learn where all the lights are for adverse weather conditions. You don't want to be flapping about on the road trying to locate your fog lights or misting wiper settings. Ask the driver at check-out to show you all the functions on the dash. Only use foglights when visibility is poor because they can dazzle other road users and make your brake lights difficult to see.



Ask for an upgrade to a 4x4 if you're making cross-country journeys

Driving in Winter

Winter Tyres

In Britain, we tend not to switch to winter tyres when the weather gets colder. This is because British winters aren't usually considered harsh enough that cars can't stay on the same rubber all year round. However, it's important to realize that winter tyres don't just work better on snow and ice, they also perform better than summer tyres on wet roads when the temperature falls below 7C. When braking on snow, winter tyres stop in half the distance that regular tyres manage. When braking on ice, winter tyres can grip and bring the car to a complete halt rather than skidding or sliding. It's also important that a tyre can provide sufficient grip for the car to pull away without wheel spinning.

Always check the weather

Even if your car is in tip top condition and you are only making a short journey, it is vital you always check the weather forecast. If it's bad and the journey you are about to make isn't crucial, stay off the roads. There is no point in taking unnecessary risks. If you have to drive, here are a few things to do to stay safe.

Clear the windows

Scrape any ice from the glass, demist the interior and don't drive off until you have good visibility all round and the fan is blowing our hot air to stop mist building up again. You will also want to remove any ice or snow from the roof of the car. When braking, the snow could fall forward and obstruct your view of the road.

Give everyone space

Stopping distances are increased in bad weather. Make sure that you leave a larger gap than you would normally when braking and taking off.

Don't use heater and heated seats continually

Make sure than you only run these when the engine is turned on otherwise you risk flattening the battery.

What to keep in the car

We recommend that in case of a breakdown, you keep the following items in your car. We will provide most of these but some you might have to transfer from your regular car to your hire vehicle.

- * Warning triangle
- * Mobile phone charger
- * Warm, waterproof clothing
- * De-icer and a scraper
- * GPS or Satellite Navigation system
- * Drinking water
- * Torch
- * High-visibility vest
- * Driving mats



Ask in branch for additional extras.

How to drive safely in Winter weather.

Source. http://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/seasonal/winter_motoring.html



Gentle manoeuvres are the key to safe driving - stopping distances are 10 times longer in ice and snow.

- Wear comfortable, dry shoes for driving. Cumbersome, snow-covered boots will slip on the pedals.
- Pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel-spin.
- Up hill – avoid having to stop part way up by waiting until it is clear of other cars or by leaving plenty of room to the car in front. Keep a constant speed, choosing the most suitable gear well in advance to avoid having to change down on the hill.
- Down hill – reduce your speed before the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid using the brakes. Leave as much room as possible between you and the car in front.
- If you have to use brakes then apply them gently.
- Automatic transmission - under normal driving conditions (motorways, etc) it's best to select 'Drive' and let the gearbox do the work throughout the full gear range. In slippery, snowy conditions it's best to select '2', which limits the gear changes and also makes you less reliant on the brakes. Some autos have a 'Winter' mode which locks out first gear to reduce the risk of wheel spin. Check the handbook.

If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels. Put a mat or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip. Once on the move again, try not to stop until you reach firmer ground.

In the event of a breakdown

Our [breakdown policy](#) will be explained to you when hiring out a car or van but if the worst should happen during the cold winter months, here's what to do.

Keep the engine running when possible to warm you and passengers and to stop the engine from freezing (in extreme conditions). Make sure your car is clearly visible to other road users so the breakdown service can find you, especially if snow is still falling. Try to position the car so the road is clear for emergency services, if there is a barrier at the side of the road, stand behind it. It is not recommended you go out into the elements but if you leave your car make a note of where you leave it, roadside markers or your smartphone can provide you with this information.

Above all else, don't panic. Call the dedicated number on your voucher that you will be given at check out. **The AA accident and emergency number is 0843 504 7216.**



Top 10 most common causes of AA Winter callouts

With increased risk of milder and wetter than average conditions for the period November-December-January based on seasonal forecasts, The AA is predicted to take over 28,000 breakdowns this month (Figures from The Met Office 30-Nov-2015.)

PROBLEM	HOW TO AVOID IT
Frozen screen washers	Not really a breakdown, unless you keep running the pump until it burns out and blows a fuse affecting. Use a screen-wash additive all year round - undiluted in winter.
Frozen wipers	Trying to operate windscreen wipers stuck solid to the glass can lead to blown fuses affecting other more vital systems. If low temperatures are forecast make sure that automatic windscreen wipers are turned off – so they don't try to operate when you turn the ignition on. Make sure the wipers aren't stuck to the glass, before setting off too.
Frozen engines	Due to lack of anti-freeze. Make sure you check it regularly and top-up using a mix of the correct type of anti-freeze.
Frozen door locks and door seals	A squirt of a water-dispersant like WD40 in the locks will help as will a light smear of Vaseline or silicone polish on the door seals. If snow falls clear it from the car while still soft rather than leaving it for days on end – the car will turn into a block of ice.
Frozen ignition locks	It's hard to keep the inside of the car completely dry when it's cold and wet outside but it'll help avoid this rare but annoying problem – don't leave wet clothes or boots in the car overnight.

Most branches use the manufacturers repair service or the AA.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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Visit us on the web at
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Top 10 most common causes of AA Winter callouts continued...

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PROBLEM	HOW TO AVOID IT
Stripped teeth on cambelt causing engine damage	Try to start a car with a frozen waterpump and you could strip the teeth off the timing belt leading to expensive internal engine damage.
Windows frozen to their frame	Windows can become detached from the mechanism inside the door if you try to power them down while the windows frozen in the frame. Best left until the car's warmed up and the ice melted.
Diesel fuel waxing	In extreme cold, wax crystals form in diesel fuel and can block fuel lines and filters. There's not much you can do to avoid it if the temperature goes really low – apart from using a garage overnight if you have one and trying to keep the car warm.
Electronic parking brake not releasing	If the driven wheels are on an icy road and can't grip it's possible that an automatic parking brake won't release.
Frozen rear drum brakes and hand-brake cables	It's good to clean the car regularly if hiring for a long time to remove corrosive road salt but not if you use a hose or pressure washer and blast water inside brake cables or drums and the temperature drops. A drive after cleaning can help but it's best to take care when hosing wheel arches or wheels.

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