



Westbury Area Board 21th February

Winter driving checklist



There are certain winter preparations you can make to your vehicle as well as precautions you can take before travelling.

Make sure that you have an emergency kit in your car. This should include:

- Ice scraper and de-icer
- Warm clothes and blankets – for you and all passengers
- Torch and spare batteries – or a wind-up torch
- Food and a flask with a hot drink
- Any medication you need to take regularly
- Boots
- First aid kit
- Jump leads
- A shovel
- Road atlas
- Sunglasses (the glare from winter sun can be dazzling)
- Car charger for your mobile phone

Is your vehicle ready for winter?

Check that your vehicle is ready for winter using the POWDERY checklist as a good reminder:

PETROL (or diesel). Have you got enough? Do you know where to fill up?

OIL – check levels once a month

WATER – check radiator, screen wash and anti-freeze levels regularly



DAMAGE – check wipers, lights etc for signs of wear and tear or damage

ELECTRICS – check lights, indicators and controls are working properly

RUBBER TYRES – are they well inflated, legal, with good tread and free from damage?

YOURSELF – are you fit to drive? Have you slept well? Are you taking any medication(s) that could make it unsafe for you to drive?

Tyres and your safety

The tyres on your car are the only part of the vehicle in contact with the road surface. You may consider yourself to be a good, safe driver but when was the last time you checked your tyres? Failure to ensure that your car is fitted with safe tyres may cause you to lose control and crash.

There are a number of weekly checks you should carry out to ensure that your car is safe.

Tread depth

Checking your tyres is one of the most basic yet important tasks you should perform as part of your regular safety checks. Worn tyres are a huge risk on the roads, as a tyre in poor condition will have a detrimental effect on the vehicle's braking and steering.

The minimum legal tyre tread depth for cars and vans is 1.6mm, although we recommend you change your tyres at 3mm. Tests have shown that, at 50mph, the stopping distance of a vehicle with 1.6mm tyre depth is 39.5 metres – with 3mm the distance had decreased to 31.7 metres. That's almost the width of a tennis court.

In wet conditions, tyre tread depth is even more important. If you don't have sufficient tread, then you will have little or no wet grip performance.

It's easy to check – take a 20p piece and insert it into your tyre tread. If you can see the outer band of the coin, then your tyres may be dangerous – get them checked.

Tyre pressure

The air pressure of tyres will also greatly affect a vehicle's handling – refer to your vehicle handbook for correct tyre pressures. Ensuring that your tyres are at the correct pressure can also increase your car's fuel economy and save you money.



Other damage

You should inspect the tyre surface and sidewalls for cracks, worn patches or bulges. If you are concerned that your tyres are damaged, then consult a garage immediately. Many tyre specialists now provide a mobile service, so there is no need to move the vehicle if you find a defect.

Penalties for defective tyres

There is currently a maximum fine of £2,500 and three penalty points for each defective tyre. If you have two bald tyres, then that's potentially a £5,000 fine and six points on your licence. Disqualification is also possible in some circumstances.

Driving in adverse conditions



The best way to be safe in extremely bad weather is to avoid driving at all. However, that's not always possible. In addition, bad weather can be unpredictable and it's common to get caught out while on the road.

These basic safe driving principles apply in all adverse conditions:

Slow right down – if visibility is poor or the road is wet or icy, it will take you longer to react to hazards and your speed should be reduced accordingly. If you have a temperature gauge in your vehicle that is showing zero degrees or below, then presume that the roads will be icy.

Maintain a safe gap behind the vehicle in front – stopping distances are double in the wet and ten times greater in icy weather. The gap between you and the vehicle in front is your braking space in a crisis.



Look out for vulnerable road users – be aware that people on foot, bicycles, motorbikes and horses are harder to spot in adverse weather and in the dark. Drive as though someone could step out in front of you at any time.

Look out for signs warning of adverse conditions – including fixed signs, such as those warning of exposure to high winds, and variable message signs on motorways that warn of fog, snow and which may display temporary slower speed limits.

Stay in control – avoid harsh braking and acceleration, and carry out manoeuvres slowly and with extra care.

Use lights – put lights on in gloomy weather or when visibility is reduced. Only use front and rear fog lights in dense fog.

Listen to travel news on local radio so you know where problem areas are.

Safe and Well Visits- Home safety

Natasha Viljoen is the Safe and Well Advisor that covers Mere and Tisbury and Martyn Jones is the Safe and Well Advisor that covers Wilton. Please contact, natasha.viljoen@dwfire.org.uk or martyn.jones@dwfire.org.uk to arrange for a talk to your group or an individual visit.

A Safe and Well visit is FREE and normally lasts about one hour covering topics such as:

- Using electricity safely
- Cooking safely
- Making an escape plan
- What to do if there is a fire
- Keeping children safe
- Good practice – night time routine and other points relevant to you
- Identifying and discussing any further support the occupier may need

If you have thatch property, are living alone, have a young family, are over 65 or a smoker please get in contact with us. We want to help make you safer in your own home. If you or someone you know has mobility or sight and hearing impairments, please suggest a Safe and Well visit.

Visit <https://www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits/> to book one.



Your local station is recruiting

On-call (retained) firefighters are ordinary people doing extraordinary work – they are men and women who may have other jobs or responsibilities as well as their vital role with the Fire & Rescue Service.

On-call firefighters are part-time staff who make themselves available for emergency call-outs depending on their other commitments. They are usually contracted for between 48 and 120 hours per week, but this can vary. Between them, each fire station team will provide cover for weekdays, evenings, nights and weekends.

How many firefighters are on-call?

Some 60% of firefighters in Dorset and Wiltshire work on an on-call basis, making them hugely important to both the Service and the communities that they serve. Of our 50 stations, the majority are crewed only by on-call firefighters and on-call staff work alongside their wholetime colleagues at many of our other stations.

Who can be an on-call firefighter?

Our on-call staff come from all walks of life: they may be employed, self-employed, parents at home or students. Some work in building or allied trades, whilst others are shop assistants, farmers, typists, factory workers or managers.

What they all have in common is self-reliance, confidence, respect, enthusiasm, team spirit and a willingness to be ready for anything when they are alerted to an emergency.

On-call and wholetime firefighters are expected to meet the same entry standards and they receive the same training and development to enable them to work to common standards.



Who can apply?

You can find out more about the role and current vacancies through these pages, but key requirements for applicants are:

- You must be at least 18 years old when you join us (you can apply once you are 17½)
- You must be able to respond and attend the fire station within five minutes (this can vary slightly dependant on location)
- You must have a good standard of physical fitness
- You must have the right to work in the UK

If you are unsure if you can apply, please contact our HR team on 01722 691444 or email recruitment@dwfire.org.uk

Community Safety Plan DWFRS Community Safety Plan 2017-2021

Outlines our plans for the future. It explains the diverse services we provide and how we plan to improve and deliver them over the four-year period. The plan can be found on the DWFRS website <http://www.dwfire.org.uk/community-safety-plan/>

Response

Incidents

December 2018

| Category | Westbury |
|-----------------|-----------|
| False alarm | 8 |
| Fire | 2 |
| Special Service | 3 |
| Total | 13 |

January 2019

| Category | Westbury |
|-----------------|-----------|
| False alarm | 7 |
| Fire | 2 |
| Special service | 2 |
| Total | 11 |

James Plumley

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