



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

NEWS RELEASE

MOTORISTS URGED TO GET READY FOR WINTER

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, ACPOS, is co-ordinating a weekend of activity to highlight the dangers associated with using the roads during the winter months.

The campaign, which is supported by all eight Scottish Police Forces, will be held on 30 and 31 October to coincide with the end of British Summer Time.

Chief Superintendent Charlie Common, who leads on Casualty Reduction for ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, stated that.

“At this time of the year the Scottish weather can be unpredictable at times and drivers can encounter numerous and differing driving conditions during a single journey. Accordingly I would urge all motorists to follow the simple safety guide that has been included with this release.

This campaign is not solely directed at motorists, but everyone using our roads. Unfortunately, I know from experience that pedestrians, cyclists and joggers are involved in serious road accidents during the winter months.

Police Forces throughout the country will be working with various Road Safety groups and organisations to offer free advice to road users. Local press outlets should be checked for information.

As the days become shorter and temperatures begin to drop, motorists must ensure that their vehicles receive a winter check and are properly maintained. For cyclists, visibility is a key issue and they too must ensure that they can be seen. Joggers and pedestrians are encouraged to wear high visibility garments and think carefully about the routes chosen.

Simple safety measures may save lives.”

Road Safety Advice – Winter Conditions

During the winter months, road conditions can be extremely difficult and dangerous. Motorists need to pay extra attention and be prepared to adapt to changing conditions. Even the most experienced motorists can find themselves getting into difficulties when the roads are icy. Our advice is to consider if your journey is absolutely necessary and if you must drive then ensure that you and your car are adequately prepared for the journey ahead.

Before you set off on your journey:

- It is vitally important to make sure your vehicle is adequately maintained and that brakes, tyres, lights, batteries, windscreens and wiper blades are in good condition.
- Tyres are the only point of contact with the road and if they are worn or incorrectly inflated then they have less grip and can significantly increase stopping distances in the event of an emergency.
- Tyres should also be checked for bulges, cuts or tears which will weaken the tyre and potentially lead to a collision. The minimum legal tread depth is 1.6mm but this is the legal minimum and it must be remembered that tyres perform more efficiently with a greater depth of tread.
- Windows including the windscreen should be demisted and fully cleared of any frost, snow or ice.
- Check that wiper blades are not worn and are capable of clearing the screen correctly.
- Check brakes, lights, oil and washer fluid levels (add winter screen wash to your washer bottle to stop the water from freezing.)
- Carry water and de-icer in the car with you.
- Carry a few essentials in the car at all times, a warm winter jacket preferably a High Visibility one could be a life saver, other items to consider are a torch, first aid box, a blanket, sturdy boots or Wellingtons and even some warm clothes.

If you must travel in wintry weather remember to:

- Slow down and leave plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels lock, ease off the brakes.
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists and always clear all ice and snow off the car windows before setting out.
- Drive slowly on snow in the highest gear possible.
- Do not assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.
- Visibility is often reduced because of fog, rain, spray, hail or snow. Remember to ensure that you use dipped headlights in periods of reduced visibility. Fog lights can only be used when visibility is seriously reduced to less than 100 metres but must be switched off if visibility improves.

If you get stuck in snow:

- Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper. Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the accelerator to ease your car out.
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
- Pour sand, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels – or even use your floor mats – to help get traction.
- If you must leave your car, arrange to have it recovered as soon as possible. If you think it is in a place that may pose a danger to other road users, call the police to let them know.

Pedestrians, Joggers, Cyclists.

- Cyclists should ensure that they have suitable lights on their bicycles and that they wear reflective and fluorescent clothing and a cycle helmet.
- Pedestrians and Joggers should where possible wear High Visibility clothing or brightly coloured clothing, this will allow other road users to see you earlier.
- Everyone using our roads should avoid any distraction devices and that includes using mobile phones and listening to excessively loud music through ear phones.
- Further advice for joggers can be found on the Jog Scotland website.
- Children should also wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing as they will generally be walking to school during darkness or reduced visibility.

Transport Scotland

Transport Scotland provides comprehensive updates on road closures and weather conditions. The Transport Scotland website also includes links to webcams placed alongside major routes throughout Scotland, including the A720 (Edinburgh city bypass), the M8, M9 and the A68

Internet

As many people have access to the internet, they should do their own research to find more advice that is suitable to them. Motoring organisations, government web site, Jog Scotland and various sites dedicated to cyclists, motorist, joggers and horse riders are all available and provide a wide range of advice and assistance.

-end-

Notes to editors:

Northern Constabulary will also be supporting the "Get Ready For Winter Campaign" this is a partnership with AA, Diageo, MFR, North Sound and Grampian Police.

Police officers from both forces will be giving advice over the radio for the next 3 months on drink driving and winter safety.

The AA will also be running free vehicle check days on the following dates, times and locations. Winter safety Bags will be handed out

6th Nov Aberdeen Tesco 0900hrs-1200hrs

13th Nov Inverness Tesco 0900hrs - 1200hrs

20th Nov Elgin Tesco 0900hrs - 1200hrs

27th Nov Dingwall Tesco 0900hrs - 1200hrs

For interviews about this campaign, please contact your local police force press office.

For further information, please contact:

David Steele, ACPOS Communications

0141 435 1241 or 07771 842 881