



Winter Driving Study

Research was carried out by Auto Trader in November 2019, using a sample of 2,006 UK car drivers.

 AutoTrader



The Auto Trader Winter Driving Study

Every year, thousands of road accidents take place during the winter months which could have been avoided with a little more preparation or knowledge.



Between October – December 2018 alone, there were 32,000 road accidents – 443 of which proved fatal*.

To lift the lid on potential reasons why there are so many collisions during the darker months of the year, we carried out a survey of more than 2,000 UK car drivers, to assess British motorists' winter driving habits.

This also examined the extent of drivers' knowledge of best practice and guidance for driving in challenging conditions, from ice to snow. We hope you find the results insightful.

*Department for Transport data 2018

For the avoidance of doubt, we have created a Guide to Winter Driving, outlining the best practice that motorists can arm themselves with, to keep themselves safe on the roads. Click [here](#) to read it.



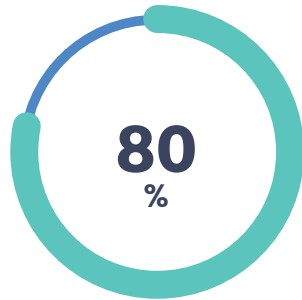
Knowledge Gap

The results reveal that an alarming knowledge gap exists amongst UK drivers, with many unfamiliar with some of the basics of the Highway Code's guidance on winter driving – from an overwhelming majority of drivers failing to know the correct stopping distance on icy roads, to being unable to identify black ice.

The Winter Driving Knowledge Gap



1 in 4 (28%) are scared to drive in the snow



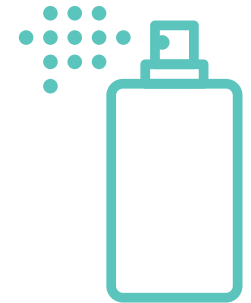
80% of drivers were not able to identify the correct safe stopping distance for driving in icy conditions



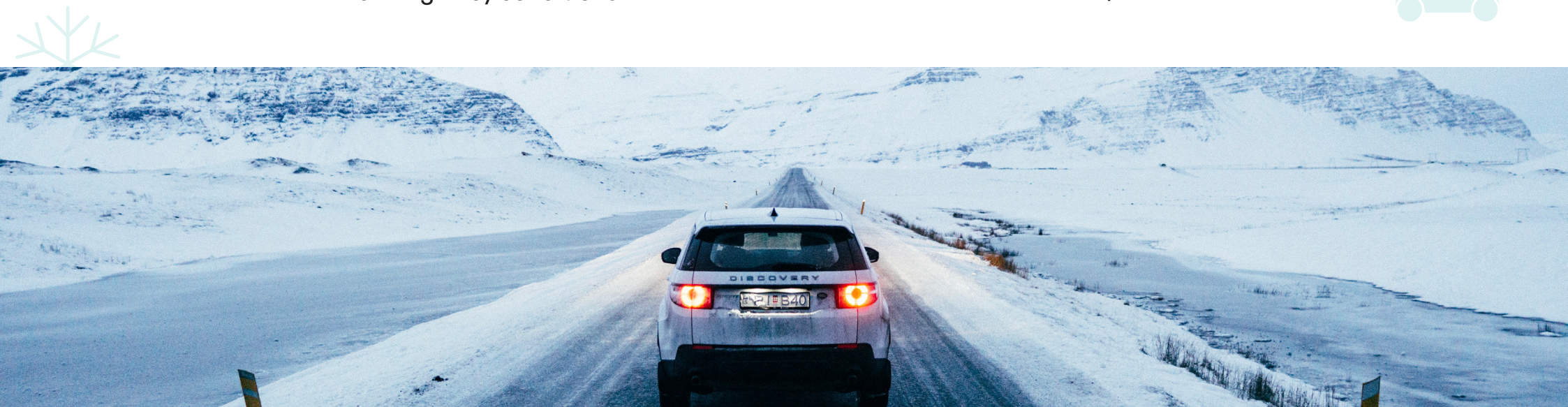
27% wrongly thought the stopping distance increases only three times on ice



More than half (59%) of car drivers do not realise black ice is transparent



Only 46% know where to put anti-freeze in their car

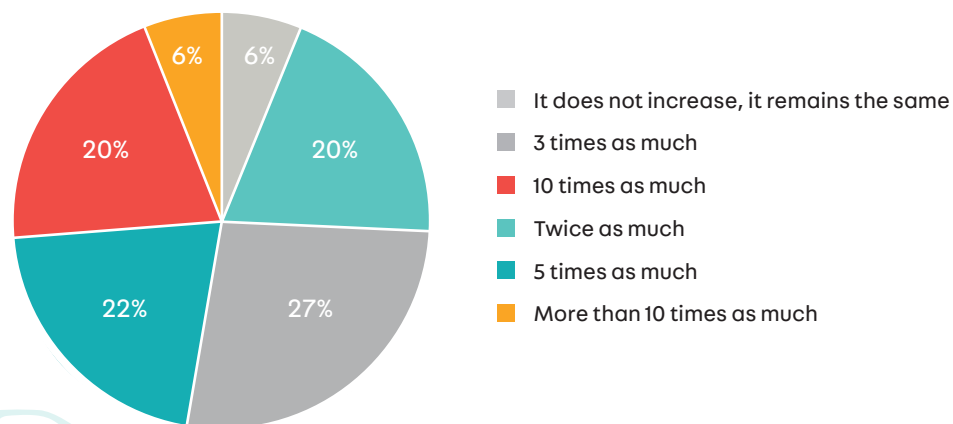


Which of the following statements do you believe to be true?

Black ice is see-through	41%	✓
When it snows the speed limit is automatically 10 miles per hour slower than the signs stipulate	27%	✗
You should quickly engage your brakes if skidding over ice or water	8%	✗
It is illegal to drive downhill when it is snowy	8%	✗
It is illegal to drive white cars when it snows	8%	✗

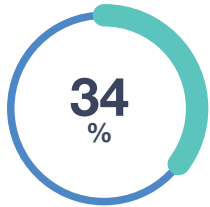
Key: ✓ Correct ✗ Incorrect

By how much does stopping distance increase when driving in icy conditions, do you think?

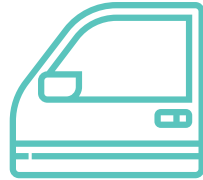


Dangerous Winter Driving Habits

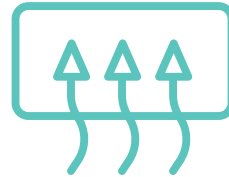
The study has also revealed the alarming and dangerous risks drivers are taking to cut corners during wintry weather – from driving with their heads out of the window when the windscreen is iced over, to driving one handed with a hot drink in one hand.



More than 1 in 3 (34%) car drivers turn their car on and leave it to go back inside while it warms up



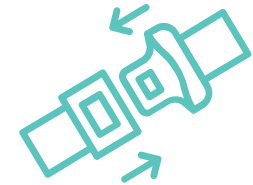
3.6 million drive with their head out of the window when their windscreen is iced over



1 in 5 do not wait for windscreens to demist before driving

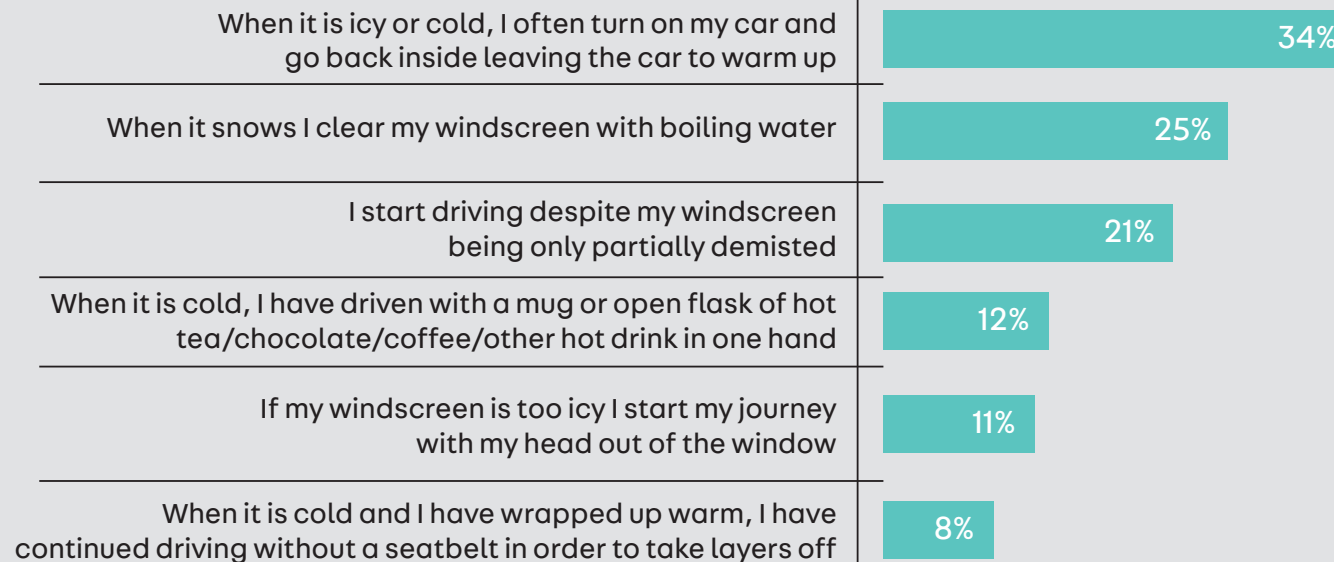


More than 1 in 10 (12%) have driven one-handed to hold a warm drink on cold mornings



8% have driven without a seatbelt in order to remove layers of clothing as they warm up

Which of these statements apply to you?





Risky Maintenance

According to the data, British drivers are also risking breaking down or damaging their cars through bad habits or a lack of knowledge.

Many could be at risk of break down as a result of not keeping their cars topped up with anti-freeze, while others are risking cracking their windscreens by pouring boiling water on them when they are frozen.

1 in 4 (25%) pour boiling water over their windscreen when it's frozen



50% do not keep their car topped up with anti-freeze



1 in 3 (33%) don't own an ice scraper



Conclusion

As we can see, British drivers are in many ways in the dark about best practice for winter driving – and could unknowingly be putting themselves and others at risk as a result.

To arm car drivers with best practice for wintry conditions ahead of the coldest months of the year, we have published a Guide to Winter driving, which details the information, rules and best practice for driving and car maintenance during freezing temperatures. Click [here](#) to read it.

