

Date:13 January 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Check local conditions, plan route and drive slowly

Road users across Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire are reminded to plan their route, drive slowly and allow extra time to carry out manoeuvres as overnight snow fall continues to make driving hazardous throughout much of the region.

Many routes that may have cleared at the beginning of the week may now be difficult once again so motorists are advised to check local conditions before making the decision to use the roads.

Further snow fall means that if motorists do decide to drive they should continue to approach all roads with caution and drive according to the conditions. Some major routes are still passable with care but many minor and side roads should be avoided.

Rod Reynolds from the Safer Roads Partnership says: "Overnight snowfall has once again made many routes across the region difficult for motorists. If making the decision to drive, there are things that motorists can do to make their journey safer. Our advice is firstly to assess the route that you wish to take and consider the types of roads you will be travelling on. Many major routes are passable with care but minor roads are still causing problems and should be approached with caution or avoided completely. Secondly, we advise motorists to prepare for the journey and the possibility that they may break down or get stuck in the snow. Make sure you have warm clothes, food, drink, boots, a torch and a fully charged mobile phone in the car. Also ensure that all snow and ice is cleared from windscreens, mirrors and lights before setting off. Thirdly, and most importantly, if you do decide to drive, slow down and allow extra time to carry out basic manoeuvres. Avoid accelerating quickly and leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front."

When preparing to drive in wintry conditions:

- Check the local and national weather forecasts
- Listen to local and national radio stations for up to date travel information
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive and what route you plan to take
- Make sure you have warm clothes, food, drink, boots, a torch and a fully charged mobile phone in case you break down
- In snowy conditions carry a spade

When driving in bad weather conditions:

- Motorists should keep well back from the vehicle in front
- Slow down and allow extra time to carry out manoeuvres
- If steering becomes unresponsive it may mean water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually
- Rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen, motorists should reduce their speed and clearly indicate at roundabouts and junctions

Vehicle condition is also a vital part of road safety. Motorists are advised to:

- Keep lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from snow and ice
- Make sure the car battery is fully charged
- Add antifreeze to the radiator and winter additive to the windscreen washer bottles
- Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order
- Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth (the legal minimum tread depth for car tyres in the UK is 1.6mm across the centre three quarters of the tyre) and are maintained at the correct pressure
- Make sure the brakes are working correctly
- Make sure that you understand the meaning of all warning displays on the vehicle instrument panel: do not ignore warning signs, they could indicate a dangerous fault developing

For more information visit the Safer Roads Partnership website at www.srpwestmercia.org.uk or the West Mercia Police website at www.westmercia.police.uk

For up-to-date weather checks visit www.metoffice.gov.uk