



## Practical tips for driving in winter sun

In the worst of the winter weather months it's not just the traditional ice and snow that we need to be prepared for. The list of adverse weather also includes bright sunshine. In the winter when the angle of the sun is low (more or less at eye level when sat in the driving seat) it can be difficult enough, but when coupled with wet roads you can, quite literally, be blinded by the light.

Wear sunglasses – this helps to reduce the glare and keep eyes efficient for longer. If you wear prescription glasses, next time you go for an optician's appointment ask about any 2-for-1 offers and have one of the sets made up as sunglasses.

After rain the wet road surface will be reflected so it's a double-whammy – the glare from the sun overhead and the reflective glare from the road surface; a deadly cocktail which will seriously reduce the ability to see clearly. Reduce your speed and take extra care.

Make sure all the windows are clear – vinegar is one of the best window cleaners! Sunshine and dirty windows don't make a good combination when driving. Clean windows will help cut down the glare.

Ensure wiper blades are in good condition and keep the windscreen reservoir topped up. Carry a bottle of water and low-temperature windscreen washer fluid for easy top-ups.

In bright sunshine you can tell which direction you're going in by where the sun is. Make the connections... if your journey is taking you eastwards in the morning, you will be driving into the sun. Equally so, it will be in your eyes again when you return in the late afternoon. Driving with constant sun in your eyes is exhausting and may well affect your concentration.

If driving directly into the sun, use the sun visors. If the visor doesn't come down far enough to block the glare, tilt your head back just slightly – your eyelids and lashes will help to give some additional protection against the low angle of the sun.

Don't look directly at the sun. Direct eye contact with the sun (or reflected sun) can bleach the retina and affect vision from 5 seconds to as long as 30 seconds.

If the sun is behind you, be prepared to get glare from the rear window of the vehicle in front.

When driving with the sun behind you, using the anti-dazzle setting on the rear view mirror may prevent glare reflecting from your mirror.

When driving with the sun behind you, consider using dipped headlights so oncoming vehicles can see you earlier and more clearly because remember, if the sun is behind you, it's in the eyes of oncoming drivers.

Be aware that silver or white cars are harder to see in bright sunlight because they can 'blend in' so easily.