

## **Top Tips for Keeping Safe in Severe Weather Conditions**

### **For Businesses:**

To reduce the impact on businesses on days of snow, RSA recommends that the following steps are taken immediately:

- Review your Business Continuity Plan; think about how you'll best be able to service your customers, suppliers and key stakeholders if your business is disrupted.
- Give early warnings of any problems to your customers and suppliers.
- List (in a safe place) the telephone numbers of the people you may need to contact, e.g. insurance company, emergency plumber/electrician.
- Encourage staff to plan alternative routes to work in the event that their usual route is disrupted.
- Speak to your IT department to enable more of your staff to be able to work from home.
- Priority areas should be salted and gritted in advance. Arrangement should be made for access routes to be inspected regularly. Temporary signs denoting safe routes may be necessary.

### **In The Car:**

Cold weather can play havoc with cars. Flat batteries are the main cause (32%), followed by cars turning over but won't start up (15%). In fact motorists are 50% more likely to breakdown in January, February and March when temperatures are often colder, than any other month of the year.

Our advice to motorists during freezing weather conditions:

- Refer to local authority / council websites for news of road conditions, accidents and road closures.
- Follow guidance in the media (radio, TV, etc.) and only set out if your journey is absolutely necessary.
- If you must travel, make sure you have certain items in the vehicle with you e.g. shovel, de-icer, warm clothing and blankets, food and a flask of hot drink and a fully-charged mobile phone.
- Adapt your driving style to the conditions: start off in a higher gear than normal (e.g. 2nd) to reduce wheel spin, be smooth and gentle with steering and brakes and allow much longer braking distances than you would normally (especially when approaching junctions).
- Be alert for ice (when the steering feels "light" to the touch) and bear in mind it could lie below freshly fallen snow.
- If you do have an accident and the vehicle is immobilised, use hazard warning lights to alert other motorists. If the accident involves another motorist just get their name, registration number and a contact phone number - report the claim as soon as you can and leave the insurers to sort everything else out.
- Check anti-freeze levels and carry de-icer in case the locks freeze.
- For cars that are not being used that often ensure that you regularly turn the engine over and keep the engine running to keep the battery energised.
- If warming your car up don't leave it unattended with the keys in the ignition. Many cars are stolen this way by opportunist thieves each year.
- During cold weather it's especially important to check tyre, battery and wiper blade condition. Make sure the lights are fully functioning and double check oil and fuel levels before setting off
- Take your breakdown telephone help-line number and mobile phone with you on all journey.

### **At Home:**

- Leave your central heating running, not on a timer, but at a constant temperature (the coldest time is between 1am and 3am). If possible, leave it running in all rooms.
- If you know you're going to be away, either leave the heating on, or drain off your water and heating systems. If you have a property that is unoccupied, drain the system. To do this, turn off

the stopcock, shut down the boiler and open all taps. If you're unsure about the central heating, speak to a plumber. Remember to leave your insurance details with a friend or neighbour.

- Check the lagging on your pipes and water tank – pay a visit to the loft if needs be. If you have enough constant heating in the house, it will prevent the water tank from freezing. The most likely effect of the sub-zero temperatures in the home will be frozen pipes and water tanks.
- Bring pets indoors and if you have fish, leave something floating in the middle of your pond – i.e. a ball. When you want to get air to them, lift up the ball.
- Keep a supply of batteries, torches and provisions.
- If your home loses power – keep the freezer door shut.