



Media release
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Drive safe this winter

June marks the official start of winter which brings more challenging driving conditions including rain, fog, ice, and often snow. Daylight hours are also shorter, and visibility is often poor during the morning and evening rush hours when many people are on the roads.

“While the weather has been quite mild for much of May - June, July and August traditionally bring colder weather with frosts often occurring in the morning and snow fall can also occur in Selwyn. During winter, people need to allow extra time for journeys to defrost the car before starting and travel more slowly on wet or icy roads,” says Selwyn Road Safety Coordinator Ngaire Tinning.

“If visibility is poor in the morning or evening or due to gloomy conditions or fog, putting your lights on will make your vehicle more visible to others and will make your journey much safer.”

If you travel in the morning or evening in frosty conditions, reduce your speed on frosty mornings as ice is likely to be present, and see our driving tips below. Ice can also be a problem during the daytime on patches of road shaded by trees or fences, so watch out for this and reduce your speed before entering these areas.

Free windscreen cloths and ice scrapers are now available at Council Library/service centres.

Check out our driving tips to help make your journey safer in winter:

Driving in the wet

Stopping distances nearly double on wet roads. You need to:

- Slow down and keep a generous distance from the car in front of you
- The two-second rule should be a four second rule
- Be extra vigilant – take corners slowly. Watch out for road signs warning of flooding and allow more time to stop in wet conditions.

Driving in snow and ice

Go slow on ice and snow:

- Whenever possible, avoid driving in heavy snow and ice
- If you cannot avoid driving on snow or ice, then slow down, allow for much greater braking distances and avoid braking suddenly.
- If you're driving on a winding road, keep left and drive slowly, as you could quickly lose control

- Watch out for ice in shaded areas, particularly if has been wet. After snow melts, there is likely to be ice, especially in shaded places and bridges
- You should also carry chains, know how to fit them and use them when necessary

Driving in fog

Turn on your headlights, not just your park lights. You should also:

- Reduce your speed as visibility is poor and keep a large following distance
- Keep your headlamps on low (dip) beam, as high beam will reflect off fog and produce glare

Only use fog lamps when visibility is severely reduced (e.g. by snow or fog). It is illegal to use fog lamps in clear conditions as they can dazzle other drivers.

Driving with sun strike

Sunstrike generally occurs early morning and late afternoon. Familiarise yourself with the areas where it happens and take more care at these locations. Always keep your windscreen clean, inside and out, and reduce your speed.

Ends

Photo attached: *Rain conditions are common and one of a number of challenges when driving in winter*

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