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RAC statement on current and forecast extreme weather

Commenting on current and forecast severe weather and the impact on drivers, RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said:

“Yesterday (Tuesday) was our busiest midweek day in late February in ten years with breakdowns up a third on what we would expect this time of year. If anything today looks even busier with the combination of bitterly low temperatures everywhere and significant ice and snow in parts continuing to cause havoc for motorists.

“All around the UK, our patrols are working extremely hard around the clock to reach our members and get them moving again in what are some rapidly changing weather conditions.

“With a red weather warning now in place for parts of Scotland until tomorrow morning – some areas could receive more than a foot of snow, and some communities may even get cut off – the simple advice to drivers here is not to travel.

“The next 24 to 48 hours are going to be critical as Storm Emma moves in from the south bringing low pressure and plenty of moisture. She is set to clash with dry icy winds from Russia resulting in heavy snowfall for the south and south west from tomorrow. We also have the very strong risk of freezing rain – arguably the most treacherous of all conditions for motorists – as heavy rain falls on frozen ground, turning instantly to ice.

“For drivers, the first consideration is whether your journey is really essential or whether you are able to avoid travelling during the worst conditions.

“If you must drive, do your preparations - check local weather and traffic reports, plan your route carefully using main roads where possible and consider alternative routes in case you encounter difficulties. Clear your car of snow and ice and ensure you have good all-round visibility and that your screen wash is fully topped up with quality additive.

“Take care on the roads and drive to the conditions – keep your speed down, leave plenty of room between your car and the vehicle in front, and avoid braking and accelerating sharply.

“As Storm Emma moves across the country she will ensure that those parts which have not borne the brunt of the bad weather now get a taste of the winter extremes. If drivers have an opportunity today we strongly urge them to take the ten minutes to carry out some simple vehicle checks to help avoid a breakdown.

“Use the acronym ‘FORCES of winter’ to run through the DIY checks. ‘F’ is for fuel – ensure you have plenty for your planned journey. ‘O’ is for oil – one third of cars our patrols attend are running dangerously low on oil and this could cause catastrophic engine failure. ‘R’ is for rubber – check your tyre treads – ideally you need at least 3mm to maintain good grip and traction on snow and ice and ensure they are at the correct pressure. Also check your wiper blades aren’t perished and they do a good job of clearing your windscreen. ‘C’ is for coolant – top up if necessary – you don’t want your car overheating when you are stuck in sub-zero temperatures. ‘E’ is for electrics – most importantly your lights – ensure they are all working and that they are clean and free from salt and muck. ‘S’ - finally check your screen wash is topped up and use a quality additive which is effective down to at least -15 or -20 degrees Celsius.

“We are also advising drivers to pack an emergency winter driving kit - prepare for the worst and hopefully you will have a safe and smooth journey. Ensure you pack extra warm clothing, waterproofs and sturdy footwear in case you have to get out of your vehicle. And pack a shovel, a warning triangle, a torch and ensure you have a fully charged mobile phone. And don’t forget to take some food and water and a hot drink just in case you become stranded.”

For more advice on preparing for and driving in the cold, plus tips on avoiding a breakdown in the first place, [visit the RAC website](#).

The press office email address is press.office@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to nearly 14 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC's breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request