

## December – Safe and savvy travel



### ***Keep safe on the road this Christmas***

The most important thing you can do this Christmas is to enjoy time with family and friends. If you're driving home for Christmas, keep safe on the roads by following these tips.



### ***Safety starts with your car***

Ensuring your safety on the road this Christmas should start with your car. If you plan on driving over a long distance, ideally it would be a good idea to get your car serviced in the months or weeks leading up to your trip.

Otherwise, there are a few things you should check to make sure you don't end up on the side of the road and miss out on that all important Christmas dinner!



**Tyres** – your tyres will take some wear and tear on the road in the hot summer months, so make sure there is adequate tread, the correct air pressure is in each tyre, and that your spare, jack and spanner kit is in good shape.



**Washers** – check your wiper blades so that your visibility isn't impaired should you encounter some torrential summer rain. Top up your washer bottle too!



**Belts and hoses** – have a look at your fan belts, as these are responsible for keeping the overall cooling system from overheating. If they are looking frayed, they might need replacing. The hoses should be free of cracks so that they continue to pump coolant to the radiator.

🎄 Filters – air filters need to be cleared of debris for good airflow to keep the engine cool, and keep the air conditioning system clear.

🎄 Oil check – conduct an oil check before your trip home this Christmas so that your engine is properly lubricated in the warm weather.

🎄 Battery – give your battery a once over, cleaning off any built up gunk and checking all connections are secure, and keep some jumper leads in your boot.

🎄 Lights – it's a requirement to have all headlights and brake lights in working order to be on the road, but it's worth double-checking that none need replacing to avoid any problems.

🎄 First aid kit – keep a first aid kit handy for any unexpected injuries or health issues.

### ***Plan extra time into your journey***

The traffic level can be unpredictable at this time, so better to be cautious and allow for extra time, especially if you're travelling on the day or just before Christmas Day. There may be more caravans and trailers towing boats on the road, which can cause minor delays and require extra caution from all drivers.

So allow an extra amount of time for your journey, even if you've done it before. Better to arrive safe and calm than rush and put your family or anyone else in danger!



### ***Check the weather and conditions***

Watch out for unpredictable weather and plan accordingly. Keep abreast of the news and listen to local radio on your journey to keep up-to-date on any changes to the conditions ahead of you.

### ***Be aware of fatigue***

The lead up to Christmas and the holiday period can be a very busy time of year. Christmas Day itself can be exhausting, with all the present opening, abundance of food and family times!

The weather is usually warm which is great for outdoor activities, but it can also make you a little weary at the end of the day. Get a good night's sleep before you head off and try not to travel for more than a total of 8 hours, taking breaks frequently along the way.

Don't let yourself drive if you're feeling very tired, as fatigue can cause you to lose concentration on the road. If you are on the road and you start to yawn, your eyes feel heavy or your concentration is waning, pull over and take a 15 minute power nap.



### ***Watch your alcohol intake***

We've all heard the statistics and campaigns around drink driving in this country. Whilst the legal limit of alcohol in your system on the road is 0.05, your best bet is to avoid drinking alcohol all together if you plan on driving the family around at Christmas time.

Alcohol impairs your judgement, gives you slower reaction times, causes fatigue and if over the limit, you may end up with fines and loss of your license, or worse – causing serious injury to you, your family and others on the road.

### ***Keep the kids busy***

Keep the kids occupied by bringing along plenty of activities they can do in the back seat to let you concentrate on driving.

You could also play games, an audio book, or strap a tablet to the back of the seat to let them watch their favourite cartoons.

Remember to plan for frequent toilet stops which will also give you a chance to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

