WINTER CAR CHECKLIST

Check the car in October, pack the kit before the first frost, and keep it in the car until spring.

▶ Read the full guide at ukprepperhub.co.uk →

■ Check in October **■ Keep in the car until April**

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"I check the car on the first Sunday in October, with a flask of tea and this list. Janet holds the torch. Do the checks once, keep the kit in the car until April, and you'll never be the person scraping the windscreen with a loyalty card."

— Calm Clarissa, UK Prepper Hub

AUTUMN CAR CHECKS (ONCE, BEFORE THE FIRST FREEZE)

Twenty minutes on the driveway. Anything borderline goes to a garage now, not in January.

- [ ] Battery tested, and replaced if it's borderline or 3+ years old
- [ ] Tyre tread 3mm or more on all four tyres, plus the spare
- [ ] Tyre pressures checked cold and set to the handbook figures
- [ ] Tyres checked for cracks, bulges and uneven wear
- [ ] Windscreen chips repaired
- [ ] Wiper blades replaced if they smear
- [ ] Screenwash filled with a winter concentrate rated to at least -15°C
- [ ] Coolant freeze point checked
- [ ] All lights working: dipped, full beam, brake, indicators, fog
- [ ] Oil checked and topped up
- [ ] Brakes checked if anything feels or sounds wrong
- [ ] Diesel: anti-gel additive before a long hard freeze
- [ ] Breakdown cover current, and the number written down

USEFUL TOOLS FOR YOUR CAR CHECKS

One-off buys that let you do most of the checks above yourself.

- [ ] **Tyre tread depth gauge** See our pick →
  Digital readout in millimetres. Aim for 3mm or more in winter; it checks brake pad wear too.
- [ ] **12V tyre inflator** See our pick →
  Plugs into the 12V socket, shows the pressure and switches off at the pressure you set. Keep it in the boot for slow punctures.
- [ ] **Car battery tester** See our pick →
  A quick voltage and alternator check any time. If it's borderline, get a garage to test it properly.
- [ ] **Antifreeze tester** See our pick →
  Count the floating discs to read your coolant's freeze protection. For ethylene glycol coolant, which most cars use.
- [ ] **Windscreen frost cover** See our pick →
  Frost settles on the cover, not the glass. Two sizes, so measure your windscreen first.

IN THE CABIN (WITHIN REACH BEFORE YOU STEP OUT)

If the car is half-buried or in a verge, the boot is the last thing you can safely reach. These live in the door pockets, glovebox or under a seat.

- [ ] **Ice scraper and snow brush** See our pick →
  Clear the whole car, roof included.
- [ ] **De-icer** See our pick →
  Works on frozen door locks too.
- [ ] **Spare screenwash concentrate** See our pick →
  Rated to -36°C. A motorway in slush can empty a reservoir in a day.
- [ ] **Hi-vis vest** Read our review →
  One per regular passenger is even better.
- [ ] **Warm, waterproof gloves** See our pick →
- [ ] **Ice grips for your shoes** See our pick →
  Full-sole grips, so your heel grips too. Check the size against the shoes you drive in.
- [ ] **Hand warmers** Read our review →
  Nothing to charge. Check the use-by date every October.
- [ ] **Phone cable and a charged power bank** Read our review →
- [ ] **Breakdown number written on paper**
  If your phone dies, this is how you get help.
- [ ] **Window breaker and seatbelt cutter** See our pick →
  Spring-loaded, no swing needed. Two in the pack: one for the driver, one for the back. For side windows; check your car's aren't laminated.

IN THE BOOT

- [ ] **Folding snow shovel**
  For the wheels, and to keep the exhaust clear if you're stuck.
- [ ] **Portable carbon monoxide alarm** Read our review →
  Warns you if a blocked exhaust is filling the car while you run the engine to keep warm.
- [ ] **Jump leads** See our pick →
- [ ] **Or: a portable jump pack** Read our review →
  Starts the car on its own, no second car needed.
- [ ] **Head torch** Read our review →
  Both hands free for leads, wheels and shovels.
- [ ] **Backup torch** Read our review →
- [ ] **Spare AAA batteries** See our pick →
- [ ] **Warning triangle** See our pick →
  At least 45 metres behind the car. Never on a motorway.
- [ ] **LED road flares** See our pick →
- [ ] **Traction mats** See our pick →
  Under the drive wheels when you're stuck.
- [ ] **Foil blanket** See our pick →
- [ ] **Or: a self-heating throw** Read our review →
  Warmth with no power at all.
- [ ] **First aid kit** See our pick →
- [ ] **Bottled water** See our pick →
- [ ] **Or: a 10 litre water can** Read our review →
  Drinking water for you, a drink for the dog and a way to rinse a cut hand.
- [ ] **Snacks or energy bars** Read our review →
  Swap them out each autumn.
- [ ] **Glow sticks** Read our review →
  Safe light inside the car, no batteries.
- [ ] **Wind-up radio** Read our review →
  Travel news without draining the car battery.

WARM AND DRY

- [ ] **Thermal hat** See our pick →
- [ ] **Waterproof trousers** See our pick →
  Hi-vis or reflective, so you're seen at the roadside.
- [ ] **Waterproof jacket (any you already own)**
- [ ] **Wellingtons (any pair you already own)**

- [ ] Whole car cleared: roof, windscreen, windows, mirrors, lights
- [ ] Met Office warnings checked
- [ ] Route checked for closures
- [ ] Someone knows your route and arrival time
- [ ] Phone charged
- [ ] Fuel above a quarter of a tank
- [ ] What3Words app installed



Prepared, Not Panicked

A checklist tells you what. The book tells you why, how, and in what order, which is where most people come unstuck. 261 full-colour pages for £4.99, as a PDF. I approve, and I don't approve of much.

See the book →

Missing Something?

Using a printed copy? Point your phone camera at the code for anything you still need and it'll open our review or pick on ukprepperhub.co.uk.

Our winter car kit list

Hi-vis vest

Hand warmers

Phone cable and a charged power bank

Portable carbon monoxide alarm

A portable jump pack

Head torch

Backup torch

A self-heating throw

A 10 litre water can

Snacks or energy bars

Glow sticks

Wind-up radio

Printed copy? Missing pages? Scan for the full guide and checklist.