Safe driving in the snow

Driving in the snow can be challenging, especially if you are not used to the icy conditions. The following tips will help prepare you and your car for the trip.

Before you go
- **Have your vehicle checked**
  Snow field conditions may highlight any existing minor faults, particularly in the electrical system so it is essential to thoroughly check your vehicle before leaving home. Have your tyres, battery, brakes, cooling system, engine and windscreen inspected.
- **Add anti-freeze**
  Add anti-freeze to your engine radiator. You’ll need to match the amount of anti-freeze to the capacity of the coolant system. If this isn’t done and the coolant freezes, the engine block and radiator may crack, leaving you stranded with an expensive repair bill. Most modern cars use coolant with wide temperature capabilities, but you’ll need to check with your service provider if special coolant is needed.

On the road
- **Watch your speed**
  Adjust your speed to the weather. Slow down when conditions deteriorate and proceed with caution, particularly in fog, snow or ice conditions.
- **Brake and accelerate gently**
  Braking should be gentle and early. When you accelerate, make sure you do it slowly.
- **Obey traffic signs**
  Signs are there for your safety and convenience. Always obey the speed limit and advisory signs, and take special notice of wildlife crossing signs. Many road accidents that occur in the alpine areas involve native animals crossing roads, particularly at night.
- **Snow poles and road edges**
  Don’t drive if you can’t see the edge of the road or the next snow pole. These are painted orange and are tall enough for drivers to get their bearings in heavy snow.

When you’re there
- **Don’t apply the handbrake**
  Moisture can freeze cables and brake linings. Instead, chock the wheels, but don’t use rocks as they may damage snow-clearing machines.
- **Leave the car in gear**
  Leave the car in gear with the front wheels turned away from the slope. Remove wheel chocks from parking area when leaving.
- **Clear ice from windows and mirrors**
  Clear all glass and mirrors of ice before attempting to drive away from snowfields. Use the vehicle’s heater and fan in conjunction with the air conditioner.
- **Protect your windscreen wipers**
  If you’re parking for an extended period, lift wipers off your windscreen or place them in a plastic bag so they won’t stick to the glass.
- **Warm your engine**
  Warm the engine for a few minutes before driving off.