

WINTER 2019/20

LeasePlan

# Driving Insights

Keeping your car safe  
from your children

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# Keeping your car safe from your children

Driving with kids in the car can be difficult, particularly if they're demanding your attention while you try to focus on the road.

Most of the time, it's not something they're doing deliberately, but they can be less careful than adults (well, most adults anyway) and this can lead to mess and damage. Here are six ideas to help.

## 1. LIMIT WHAT FOOD AND DRINK THEY HAVE

This isn't always possible, of course, particularly if you're on a long journey, but avoiding foods and drinks that are greasy or sticky can go a long way to making your car easier to clean when an accident does happen.

## 2. PROTECT UNDER (AND AROUND) THE CHILD SEAT

Putting a towel or bathroom mat under their child seat can be a great way to catch crumbs and stains. And, unlike the car's upholstery, you can always put it in the washing machine to clean it. As an added bonus, this can also protect your seats from the bottom of the child seat, as it may dig in or scratch. Just make sure the child seat is still fitted safely.

## 3. GO EVEN FURTHER TO PROTECT YOUR SEATS

If you have a particularly expensive interior, such as high-quality leather upholstery, or just one that's high risk, such as white or cream seats, you may want to spend some money on seat covers for your vehicle. These aren't cheap, but they may still cost you less in the long run than having to repair or replace after stains and scratches.

## 4. LINE CUP HOLDERS AND STORAGE COMPARTMENTS

Kids tend to put rubbish anywhere they can reach, such as cup holders or storage compartments in the door. Lining these spaces makes them a lot easier to clean - as you just take out whatever is there and replace it. For example, a cupcake case is pretty much the perfect size to go in a cup holder.

## 5. GET ORGANISED

If your children are entertained, they're less likely to get bored and start damaging things by mistake. Hanging some storage off the back of the chair in front of them gives them an easy way to reach toys, books and so on - plus it protects the chair from mud when it gets kicked. You can find specific child storage products online or just try something like an over-the-door shoe organiser.

## 6. HAVE THE RIGHT CLEANING PRODUCTS READY

Accidents will happen and children can be careless, so no matter how much you plan ahead, there will be times you need to clean up after them. Having the correct products ready to hand can make this a lot easier, as well as allowing you to deal with some things before they dry or are ground into the carpet. It could be something car-specific, particularly for leather and glass, but there may also be products from around your home that can help, such as baking soda and white spirit.

These are just a few suggestions and we're sure there are lots more. Why not drop us a line on Twitter with our handle @LeasePlanUK #drivinghacks and let us know what you do.

## Top ten safest new cars of 2019

There are many reasons to choose a car, from economy and reliability to how it looks and how it drives. However, for many people, safety will be close to the top of the list.

That's why we were interested to see *What Car?* magazine's list of the ten safest cars for 2019. These were chosen by a team of judges, including Matthew Avery, Thatcham Research's director of research, Michiel van Ratingen, Euro NCAP's secretary general, and Claire Evans, consumer editor for *What Car?* Magazine.

As you might expect, all the models have high test scores, a range of safety technology and a five-star Euro NCAP rating.

- **BMW 3 Series**
- **Mazda 3**
- **Mazda CX-30**
- **Mercedes - Benz B Class**
- **Mercedes - Benz CLA**
- **Seat Tarraco**
- **Skoda Scala**
- **Tesla Model 3**
- **Volkswagen Golf**
- **Volkswagen T Cross**

# The golden hour of accidents

## The importance of First Notification of Loss (FNOL)

If you are in a road incident involving your vehicle, it's essential to tell your accident management provider as soon as it's safe to do so. Any delay can lead to less control over the terms of fixing your vehicle and the cost to repair.

Contacting your accident management provider – ideally within the first hour – means there is less chance of drivers being approached by organisations that can lead to the costs for replacement vehicles and injury claims spiraling out of control. Unfortunately, if you've had an accident, there is a whole industry waiting to make money out of it.

The extra benefit of involving your accident management provider early on is that they will do all they can to ensure you are back on the road as quickly and efficiently as possible. You don't want a ten-day repair to linger for 90 days or a rental vehicle that costs £25 a day with an insurer to cost £200 a day from a credit hire firm.

As with all aspects of your relationship with LeasePlan, we are here to help. That's why we offer a 24-hour Driverline that's open every day of the year to help speed up the process and make it easy for our customers.



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# Preparing for the cold snap

Winter can create some of the most challenging environments to drive in. Here are a few tips to help you stay safe on the roads this winter.

The first and most obvious step, is to always check the weather forecast before you set out. If the conditions are treacherous then it would be best to avoid driving at all. Remember, no trip is so vital that it is worth taking unnecessary risks for.

## 1. HIGH GEAR, LOW REVS

When setting off, using a higher gear will give you more control over the vehicle and in slippery conditions avoid using first gear if possible.

## 2. SKIDDING

If you do get into a skid in snow or ice, it may seem counter-intuitive, but take your feet off the pedals and steer the vehicle to safety. Only use your brakes when it is not possible to steer your way out of trouble.



### 3. BRAKING

Triple the normal braking distance and allow enough space to stop slowly, using a low gear earlier than normal and gently applying the brakes.

### 4. ROADS

Try and stay on the main roads, as these are more likely to have been gritted and cleared by a steady flow of traffic.

### 5. TAKE YOUR TIME

When driving in snow avoid high revs, but don't drive so slowly that you risk losing momentum and becoming stranded.

### 6. VISIBILITY

If you have to drive in heavy snowfall, use dipped headlights or fog lights, but remember to turn them off when conditions improve.

### 7. POTHOLES

Potholes are more likely to appear following freezing temperatures and may be difficult to see in snow or flooded areas. Not only can they cause damage to your vehicle, but also temporary loss of control.

### 8. FOG

Fog can quickly appear causing a sudden loss of visibility. If this happens, it's important to slow down – but don't just slam on the brakes as this could cause a collision. Gradually reduce your speed, keep your distance and use fog or dipped headlights until conditions improve.

### 9. FLOOD WATER

During the winter months and into spring, flood waters can appear as a result of heavy rain or melting snow. Wherever possible, avoid driving directly through the deepest water which is normally near the kerb. Take your time, avoid sudden acceleration and test your brakes a few times before you increase your speed again.

### 10. BE PREPARED

It may seem a little extreme to carry an emergency kit with you, but winter weather can be unpredictable. Pack for every eventuality and ensure you have the following:

- **Phone charger**
- **Warning triangle**
- **Spade**
- **Winter boots**
- **Warm clothing**
- **Hi-visibility vest**
- **De-icer and a scraper**
- **A shovel**
- **A tow rope**
- **A torch**
- **Food and drink**

Remember, no trip is so vital that it is worth taking unnecessary risks for.

A close-up photograph of a silver car's rear quarter panel. The fuel filler door is open, revealing a black fuel nozzle. To the right, a portion of the red rear light assembly is visible. The car's body is highly reflective, showing highlights from the environment. A solid green rounded rectangle is positioned in the top left corner of the image.

# An expensive mistake

According to the AA, as many as 133,000 people put the wrong fuel in their car each year.

There are all sorts of reasons that this can happen, from being preoccupied or distracted at the pump to driving a different vehicle than the one you're used to (whether it's a new car, a hire or your partner's vehicle).

However, the result is always the same. If you catch it in time, the tank just needs draining, but if you don't, you're looking at an expensive repair – estimated at between £500 and £3,000 – plus vehicle downtime.

Fill it with the wrong fuel and you could be looking at a repair between £500 and £3,000.

# Looking forward to 2020

Our latest Fleet Navigator podcast reviews the year just gone and considers what we might see in 2020; not least, some of the things that should have happened in 2019, but didn't.

As with so many things in the UK last year, the story starts with Brexit, which didn't happen - repeatedly. This uncertainty wasn't good news for fleets and it seems likely to persist into 2020, as there's still a lot that needs to be arranged, even if we do leave the EU at the next deadline.

LeasePlan has focused on helping customers prepare and that's not wasted time, as we're now in a better place for whenever Brexit happens - and however it happens.

In our podcast, we look at some of the key topics for last year and this year, such as WLTP, CCT, EVs and CAZs. We even manage to explore some areas that aren't acronyms, such as what the new Government's transport priorities might be.

*We hope you enjoy listening to it. Please keep an eye out for more podcasts later this year.*

"...there's still a lot that needs to be arranged, even if we do leave the EU at the next deadline..."

# The risks of winter driving

Most of us know that driving in winter can be more dangerous, but LeasePlan research now shows just how much. We found a 10% rise in reported incidents in winter, compared with spring and summer, and the severity rose as well.

Increased traffic, poor light and potentially icy or wet roads all make for challenging driving conditions.

We received 10,150 reports from UK drivers between October 2017 and March 2018, but only 9,208 between April and September 2018. On top of this, more drivers were injured as a result of an incident (453 to 342) and there were more that featured multiple vehicles (42 to 31). Even animals were more at risk, with a 26% increase in incidents that involved them (164 to 130).

Severe weather definitely played a part, but there are many other factors. Increased traffic, poor light and potentially icy or wet roads all make for challenging driving conditions. The good news is that there are steps you can take to keep yourself safe. Checking your oil and coolant levels, battery, tyres and lights daily can help prevent a breakdown, while forward planning your routes and trying not to drive while tired can reduce the risk of accident significantly.

# None for the road

The laws on drink driving are very specific. The alcohol limit for drivers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, 35mg per 100ml of breath or 107mg per 100ml of urine. Scotland has lower levels. If you get caught over the limit, you can face a minimum 12-month driving ban and a fine of up to £5,000.

However, it's hard to apply these figures to what you actually drink, which is why some people suggest it's best not to have anything at all if you're planning to drive the same evening. Where it gets more complicated is driving the morning after a big night – something that is particularly common in the festive season – as you could still have alcohol in your system.

It takes your body approximately one hour to process a standard drink, such as a half pint of beer, a small glass of wine or a pub measure of spirits. However, everyone is different and there is no quick fix – only time can remove alcohol from your system.

The best advice if you're planning a heavy night is to pre-arrange alternative means of transport such as a taxi, take the bus or designate a sober driver. Alternatively, you can simply drink less and make sure you leave enough time between your last drink and waking up to ensure the alcohol has made its way through your system.

*For more information and resources visit [Brake Road Safety](#):*



Don't forget the danger of 'the morning after the night before'.



## Driverline

For help with your vehicle please call the LeasePlan Driverline on **0344 493 7644**

## Online customer support

Browse our frequently asked questions to get the answers you need, fast.