

# Summer versus winter driving essay

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## **Introduction**

The detail of the major differences between driving in summer or in winter depends upon where you live. Anyone living somewhere that enjoys mild summers and moderate winters would probably see the main difference as having to deal with more hot days in high summer, and the occasional frosts in winter. However, if you live somewhere that suffers extremes of climate, then there are particular problems for both seasons.

## **Summer vs Winter: Some Issues**

Taking summer to begin with; an important benefit of the higher temperatures and all that sunshine in the longer daylight hours is that summer is kinder on our cars. There's no need to worry about having to leave the car outside overnight – it doesn't need protecting from the ravages of weather. The main issue for car drivers/owners in the summer is likely to be shielding the car's interior from the sun's heat. Failure to erect a sunshield when your car is parked can mean a steering wheel or gear shift too hot to touch when you return. Driving in the summer can mean running the car's aircon constantly, which means increased fuel consumption in return for greater personal comfort. In heavy traffic situations summer heat can also cause breakdowns through overheating, particularly if your car needs servicing.

In the winter – especially if your car has to stay outside overnight – there is nothing worse than oversleeping (because it's dark in the morning), then rushing out of the house to find your car windows are frozen over or covered with snow, so before you can negotiate your way to your destination you have to start the car, wait for the heater to clear the windows and maybe

unfreeze the windshield wipers. It's also on mornings like that when your car battery reminds you that it should have been replaced before now. And all the while you're trying to restore circulation into those fingers numb from scraping ice or removing snow. In some places, the ambient temperatures drop so low overnight that it is common practice to plug in your car to an electrical outlet to heat the oil sump in the engine, so that the car will be more likely to start the next morning.

And those winter journeys! If you're travelling somewhere in your own car, you just know that somewhere along the line there'll be "unexpected" delays. Like the truck that's jackknifed on black ice and blocked every lane, and at a spot where there are no alternate routes. In habitually colder regions, fitting winter tyres or even snow chains can become a regular practice so that snow and ice-covered roads can be negotiated in relative safety.

And of course – as those living in areas subject to extreme winters will know – driving on icy roads requires a whole different technique: always a light touch on accelerator or brake, no sudden steering changes, and above all anticipation of the road ahead and what other drivers might do next!

If you live in an area subject to really cold winters there are other precautions you need to take, in addition to garaging your vehicle at night if possible. You must certainly make sure that your engine's cooling system is protected by the required concentration of anti-freeze and that your windshield washer system is also heavily laced with an appropriate de-icing solution. (It may also be advisable to have a handy mini de-icer spray to squirt into the car door locks). In some cases (consult your dealer or mechanic for advice) the car engine oil may need changing for a lighter

grade. Winter also means more use of lights, demisters, etc, with consequently more strain on the car battery.

## **Conclusions**

Summer and winter both present different challenges for the driver.

Dependent on where you live, the problems of high temperatures in summer can cause problems and require special precautions, such as shading your car's interior when parking, and concerns about engine overheating in heavy traffic situations. However, especially for those living in regions where winters are severe, that season presents by far the greatest challenges for driving.