

# Been driving on salted roads? Don't get peppered with car trouble!

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Motorists have been rejoicing! The snow and ice have gone and we can all get back to driving without the risk of skidding or getting stuck in perilous conditions. But for the thousands of motorists who have braved roads in the worst winter for 30 years, the salted roads could leave their cars peppered with problems.

The snow and ice have gone so why is my vehicle still at risk?

As if snow and ice on the roads has not been enough for motorists to contend with in recent weeks, the after effects could still be taking their toll on your car if you managed to venture out when the roads were being gritted. Salt build up can be highly corrosive if left unattended and can cause major long-term damage to your vehicle's under body. The recent harsh winter conditions can also have an adverse effect on vital vehicle components while one of the motorists' worst enemies – the pothole – has been appearing more and more. The best thing to do is be prepared and make sure your car is in the best possible condition.

What if I just leave it to chance?

Making simple post Big Freeze vehicle checks can help avoid a host of problems. Driving and hitting a pothole can ruin tyres and can damage wheels. Visibility is crucial so topping up your windscreen washer is essential. If you can see a pothole ahead and avoid the problem in the first place, the chances are you will avoid potentially costly repairs. Leaving salt build up unattended can result in corroding bodywork. At the very least, it's unsightly and can be potentially hazardous if ignored. It is best to clean cars thoroughly with a high pressure washer (except on engine and electronics) to protect against salt corrosion.

So what can I do?

Asking a Good Garage Scheme member garage what can be done to protect your vehicle is a good place to start. Some members even run a special Spring Check. The essential checklist includes:

- " The condition and levels of summer coolant.

- " Engine oil.

- " Brakes and tyres.

- " Windscreens.

- " Wipers and lights.

Phil Dugmore, Technical Manager for the Good Garage Scheme said: Vehicles have been subject to harsh motoring conditions which might have had an adverse effect on vital components. The Spring Check will enable our membership to give motorists expert advice on the condition of their vehicles and rectify any problems.

With the promise of Spring just around the corner, the Good Garage Scheme also recommends that motorists check out their air conditioning systems, especially if they have been inactive for a couple of months. It has been proven that harmful mould and bacteria can grow in the ducts while the

system remains unused over many months. Drivers can be blissfully unaware of the dangers it can pose when switched back on.

Where can I go for help?

Simply logon to [www.goodgaragescheme.com](http://www.goodgaragescheme.com) and type in your postcode to find your nearest Good Garage Scheme member garage. A self-regulatory body for independent workshops and MOT centres, the Scheme ensures the best industry standards are maintained by its members. It has over 2,800 members who adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and offer an Industry Standard Service.

Good Garage Scheme members:

- " Adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and pledge to have their customers' best interests at heart
- " Must agree what work needs doing with their customers before it is carried out
- " Work to an Industry Standard Service checklist
- " Must supply each customer with a feedback card allowing them to give their views on service directly to the Good Garage Scheme, which operates a stringent complaints procedure
- " Are subject to regular mystery shopper-style audits and face expulsion if they break the Code of Conduct

The Scheme also operates a customer feedback system, highlighting the areas of best practice and areas for improvement which are identified by motorists using member garages for work. A five-star rating system is produced for each member garage on the Good Garage Scheme website [www.goodgaragescheme.com](http://www.goodgaragescheme.com), based on the feedback forms, to help potential future customers find the best workshop in their area.

Nationally, the Good Garage Scheme receives around 12,000 customer feedback forms every month while member garages that fail to submit any feedbacks are investigated and potentially removed from the scheme.

" Further information can be found by visiting [www.goodgaragescheme.com](http://www.goodgaragescheme.com)