

# Be prepared for driving in the snow

As winter approaches there will be numerous snowfalls in between fine and sunny days. All this changing weather has a dramatic effect on our mountain roads. For the uninitiated who may not have encountered it before, there are ways in which you can prepare for driving in the snow, as well as ensuring your car is equipped for the much colder conditions.

Two of the main factors that may cause people to have an accident or possibly slide off the road are speed and tyres.

Just because you have a great big 4WD car or SUV and the best possible tyres does not make you immune to coming unstuck if you want to drive too fast for the conditions.

Drivers negotiating snow on mountain roads need to have respect for the conditions, and the best way to do that is ease OFF the accelerator. Everyone wants to get on the slopes but when traffic is busy, showing common sense will get you there and back all in one piece.

Jindabyne in winter has occasional snow falls in town at 930m, but in general you might only encounter snow the higher up you drive to Thredbo, and more so at Perisher.

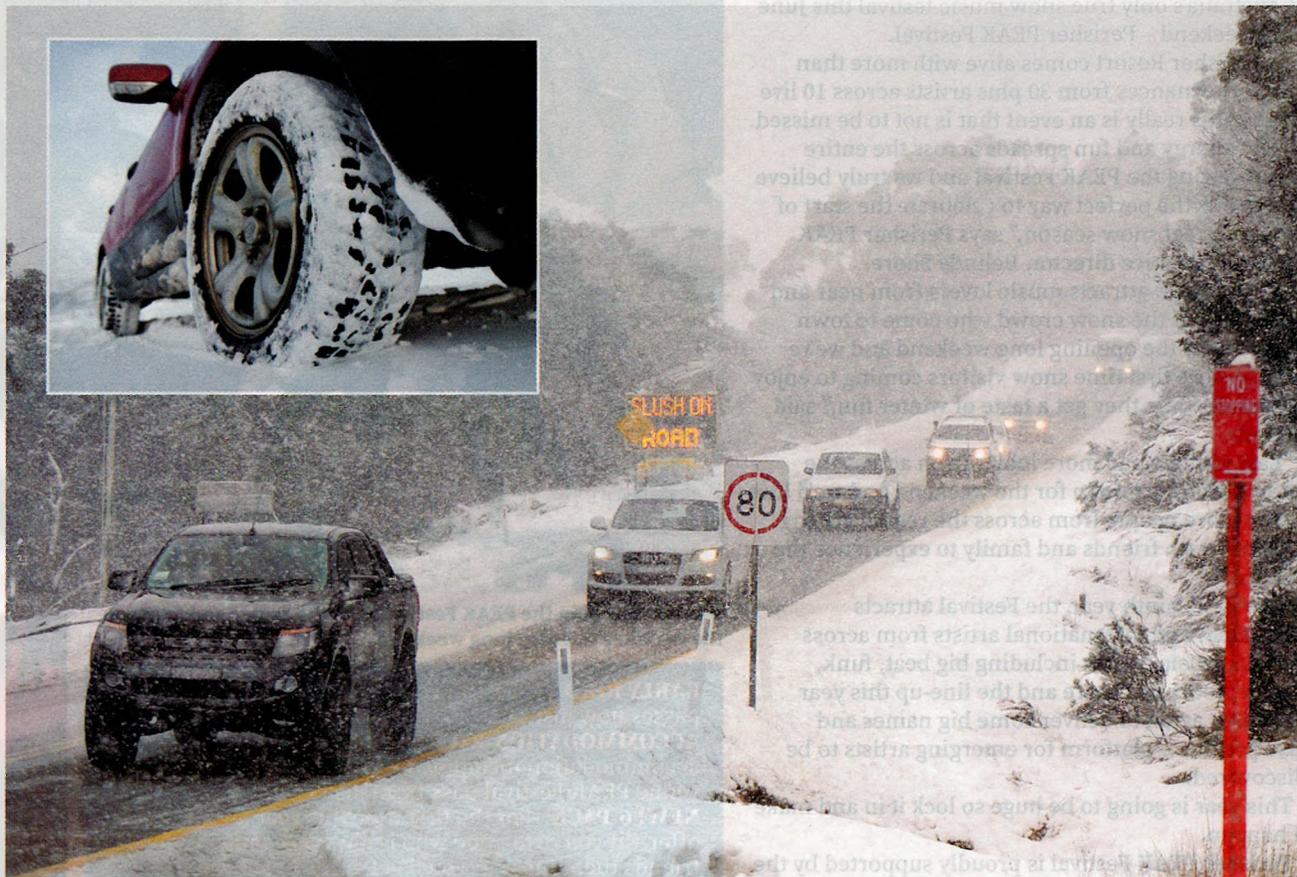
Understanding the snow reports on websites and radio also give you a good idea of where the snow is, just listen to the snow levels and what areas it has snowed to. You will need to allow extra time to reach your destination on snowy days.

Should you have a huge snowfall down to 1600m you would know that the Kosciuszko Road to Perisher will have snow, yet the Alpine Way to Thredbo Village at 1380m may not have snow.

On the heavy snow days, it is very wise to take the Skitube to Perisher, as you will avoid any road hassles, do not have to put chains on 2WD cars and you can relax on the train to the resort and be fresh for your snow day.

Two wheel drive vehicles are required to carry chains in the Kosciuszko National Park (NPWS) as you never really know when there may be a need to use them. Even if it has not snowed, there still may be ice on the roads and the NPWS staff will advise when to fit chains. This is where you should also know what to do and how to fit chains, as it can be a cold slow process if you are struggling in a blizzard to fit them.

Four wheel drive cars are exempt from carrying chains which is why you see many mountain residents and regular visitors owning 4WD cars. Having four wheel traction on snow and ice assists greatly but you still need to have good tyres.



◆ **GRIP: Control your speed and have good tyres when driving in the snow.**

PHOTOS: Steve Cuff

Tyrepower in Jindabyne stocks specific winter snow tries which is advisable if you are driving the whole season up and down to the resorts. Having these tyres will give you the best grip, even if the roads are icy, slippery and covered in snow.

Having poor tyres in the snow is a recipe for disaster, and as you could imagine, baldy tyres on slick roads does not equal very good car handling.

Overtaking on snow covered roads is not a good idea, as the car you are overtaking may be deliberately leaving space in front of them in case they need to stop quickly, so you are not doing anyone any favours by trying to get one car length ahead. And really, is it all worth it to sit

in the carpark only a few metres from the cars you have overtaken.

Your car needs to be able to handle the cold, so check with your mechanic to see if your radiator has enough antifreeze to combat temperatures down to -20 degrees. When your car sits in carparks all day on snowy days it can get extremely cold. Ensure your windscreen wash reservoir is also full and add methylated spirits which lowers the freezing temperatures.

Enjoy your snow holiday and be ready with your car prepared, have good tyres, drive to the conditions which always means slow down, and allow plenty of space in between the car in front of you.