

The FTAI have prepared this advice guide for van drivers and fleet operators to aid them in planning for challenging driving conditions. For all severe weather events it is essential that vehicles are maintained to the highest level if they are to be operated in extreme weather conditions and drivers are suitably prepared and briefed for the task ahead.

Weather Warnings are presented in three categories.

STATUS YELLOW

Weather alert
BE AWARE

Alerts are to notify those who are at risk because of their location and/or activity, and to allow them to take preventative action. Yellow level weather alerts are for weather conditions that do not pose an immediate threat to the general population, but only to those exposed to risk by nature of their location and/or activity.

STATUS ORANGE

Weather warning
BE PREPARED

Warnings are for weather conditions which have the capacity to impact significantly on people in the affected areas. An Orange level weather warning implies that those in the affected areas should prepare themselves in an appropriate way for the anticipated conditions.

STATUS RED

Severe weather warning
TAKE ACTION

Severe weather warnings are a rare event and implies that recipients take action to protect themselves and/or their properties; this could be staying indoors; or by other specific actions aimed at mitigating the effects of the weather conditions.

Operating in Severe Fog Conditions tips

VAN DRIVERS

- Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy and has sufficient fuel for your journey. Carry out the following safety checks F.L.O.W.E.R.
Fuel, Lights, Oil, Water, Electrics, Rubber
- Check that your lights, reflective markings, windscreen, and windows are clean, and that your light indicators are working.
- When unavoidably driving in fog, allow more time for the journey.
- Check your mirrors, slow down and keep a safe distance. You should always be able to stop within the distance which you can see to be clear.
- Do not chase another vehicle simply to keep its taillights in sight. It may be going too fast for safety. Equally, don't speed up to try and get away from a following vehicle.
- Be aware of your speed. Fog affects your judgement of speed, and it is easy to speed up without realising it.
- Remember a fully laden van may take longer to stop than the vehicle ahead. Drive at a speed appropriate to the conditions.
- Observe warning signals – they're there to help and protect you.
- See and be seen. Use your headlamps or front and rear fog lamps in cases of seriously reduced visibility. Use your windscreen wipers, washers, demisters, and heaters to keep your view as clear as possible.
- Beware of other drivers not using headlights.
- Ensure to turn your fog lights off when they are no longer required!
- Open your window to listen for traffic at junctions if you can't see.
- Use roadside reflectors as a guide. The markings can help you navigate twists and turns.
- Remember that fog can drift rapidly and may be patchy.
- Remember, fog can be even more hazardous after dark.

VAN FLEET OPERATORS

- Pay heed to the national weather alerts and adapt operational activity as necessary. The safety of drivers and other road users is of the highest priority.
- Are appropriate systems in place for employees who must drive for work in adverse weather conditions?
- Do employees know how to handle vehicles in adverse weather conditions? Has training been provided?
- Is there a plan in place for employees in the event of emergencies such as a collision, breakdown or getting stuck/stranded?
- Ensure communication is maintained with the driving staff.
- Ensure you know your drivers' routes or schedules and check in regularly with them.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<https://www.met.ie/warnings/today>

<https://www.rsa.ie/road-safety/campaigns/severe-weather>

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/Winter_Driving_Tips/