

Winter driving survey

Methodology:

Ipsos online panel survey conducted November 7 to 12, 2024. 628 surveys completed out of a total of 801 respondents. Those who did not have a valid B.C. driver's licence and/or have never driven in winter conditions in B.C. were screened out (173). Survey data is weighted using B.C. Census data to reflect the overall population of B.C. residents.

Key findings:

Six-in-ten drivers in British Columbia say they feel nervous driving in winter conditions:

- Six-in-ten drivers in British Columbia (60%) say they feel 'very' or 'somewhat' nervous driving in winter conditions (defined as conditions that can include snow, sleet, ice and slush).
- Those most likely to say they are nervous driving in winter conditions include drivers in Metro Vancouver (64% vs. 55% of drivers in the rest of B.C.) and drivers under the age of 55 (66% vs. 52% of drivers aged 55 and older).

Drivers in B.C. are generally comfortable when driving in winter conditions for short trips in their local areas and for regular commutes. However, comfort levels drop significantly when navigating long trips through mountain passes when driving in winter conditions.

- A strong majority of B.C. drivers say they feel confident ('very' or 'somewhat' confident) driving in winter conditions for short trips in their area (89%) and for their regular commute or routine activities (79%), however, less than half (42%) feel confident driving in winter conditions for long trips through mountain passes.



Other drivers' lack of skill driving in winter conditions top list of concerns among B.C. drivers:

When presented with a list of possible concerns around driving in winter conditions in their region and asked to rank their top three, B.C. drivers are most likely to rank drivers who don't have the skills to drive in snow and ice as their top concern (25% rank this as their top concern, while 58% rank it within their top three concerns). Other top concerns include:

- **Drivers who don't reduce their driving speed for the conditions:** one-in-five (20%) drivers in B.C. rank this issue as their top concern, while 59% rank it within their top three.
- **Drivers who don't leave enough distance between themselves and other vehicles:** one-in-ten (12%) drivers rank a lack of distance as their top concern around winter driving and 50% rank this concern within their top three.
- Although top concerns about winter driving are similar across most demographic groups, experienced drivers (those with more than 10 years driving experience) are more likely than less experienced drivers (those with 10 years or less driving experience) to rank drivers who don't reduce their speed for winter conditions as their top concern (23% vs. 9%).
- Less experienced drivers are more likely to rank their own driving skills to handle winter conditions as a top concern compared to more experienced drivers (31% rank this concern in their top three vs. 14% of experienced drivers).

A majority of drivers in British Columbia report having installed winter tires on their vehicle for this winter:

- 62% of B.C. drivers say they have installed winter tires on their vehicle for this winter season, while 38% have not done so. Those outside of Metro Vancouver were more likely to have installed winter tires than drivers within Metro Vancouver (68% vs. 56%).
- Similarly, less experienced drivers in B.C. are more likely than more experienced drivers to have installed winter tires on their vehicle (73% vs. 59%).



- Among B.C. drivers who have not installed winter tires on their vehicles, the most common reasons (aided) for not doing so include: the weather in their area not being severe enough to require winter tires (36%), drivers avoiding driving in snow and icing conditions (27%), planning to put winter tires on their vehicles later in the winter (22%), and the cost of winter tires being too high (19%).

A majority of B.C. drivers also say they have an emergency kit packed in their vehicle:

- More than half of drivers in British Columbia (56%) say they have an emergency kit in their vehicle, with less experienced drivers more likely to have an emergency kit packed in their vehicle compared to more experienced drivers (66% vs. 53%).

Extreme weather events of recent years have led many B.C. drivers to take precautions:

Respondents were provided with a list of measures that a driver could potentially take when planning to drive in winter conditions. They were then asked if extreme weather events in B.C. in recent years have made them more likely to take any of the measures listed. Nearly all B.C. drivers (95%) surveyed shared that extreme weather events in recent years have made them more likely to take some type of extra precaution(s). For each of the precautions listed, at least half of B.C. drivers report taking that measure, with the most common precautions being:

- Checking road and weather conditions before driving (74%);
- Delaying travel until road conditions improve (60%);
- Installing winter tires on driver's vehicle (59%);
- Ensuring vehicle maintenance is done for the change in season (55%); and,
- Putting an emergency kit in driver's vehicle in case they become stranded (50%).



The likelihood to take certain precautions varies across different groups of drivers:

- B.C. drivers outside of Metro Vancouver are more likely than those within Metro Vancouver to pack an emergency kit in their vehicle due to extreme weather events in recent years (54% vs. 45%).
- More experienced drivers are more likely than less experienced ones to report taking the following measures due to extreme weather events in recent years: checking road and weather conditions before driving (77% vs. 65%), and delaying travel until road conditions improve (64% vs. 45%). However, less experienced drivers are more likely than more experienced drivers to say extreme weather events have prompted them to install winter tires on their vehicle (67% vs. 57%).

