



PART 1: CAR CARE DURING LOCK-DOWN

The first of four safety bulletins providing advice for older drivers during the lock-down period.

INTRODUCTION

The Older Drivers Forum consists of road safety experts and volunteers, focused on how to keep older drivers driving safely, for longer.

Lots of useful information can be found on our web site www.olderdriversforum.com

✓ OUR AIM

With older drivers following government instructions and **socially distancing to save lives**, many are also taking a break from driving.

This bulletin provides advice on how to maintain a car during the lock-down period.

If you are not able to do any of this yourself ask family, friends, or your neighbourhood support group to help **but ensure to maintain social distancing.**

CAR CARE

✓ CLEANING

- Give the car a thorough wash and wax.
- Vacuum the interior and clean all touch points with disinfectant.
- Open the bonnet and clear out any debris in the engine compartment.
- Check regularly that no mould develops in the interior or on the window seals.

✓ PARKING

- To avoid paintwork damage from bird droppings or tree sap, avoid parking under a tree.
- If that is not possible consider investing in a car cover, but make sure it does not obscure a parking permit.
- Park near a lamppost so the car is well lit at night to deter would-be thieves. Consider buying a highly visible steering lock.
- If there is a garage available, make use of it. Check it is well ventilated and free from damp. If you have any concerns buy a dehumidifier.



MAINTENANCE

✓ BATTERY

- When not in use a car's systems continues to drain the battery. The battery may be a few years old and not hold its charge as well as when it was new. Battery life expectancy is 5 - 7 years but can be less if the car is driven occasionally.
- To maintain a battery, connect it to a trickle charger. This should be done every two weeks.
- Connecting a charger is safe if the car is parked in a driveway or garage.
- This may not be practical if the car is parked on the street as the power cables could be a trip hazard. Instead run the engine for 15 minutes once a week.
- On no account run the engine inside a garage and never leave a car unattended with the engine running.

✓ AIR CONDITIONING

- Whilst the engine is running turn on the air conditioning. This will help maintain the system's seals and prevent mould developing.

✓ WINDSCREEN WIPERS

- Once a week lift the wipers off the windscreen, so they do not become stuck.

✓ FUEL

- Fill the tank as this avoids a build-up of condensation which can cause corrosion and degrade the fuel. (Fuel stays fresh in a sealed fuel tank for up to a year.)

✓ HANDBRAKE & BRAKES

- With lack of use the handbrake can seize. If the car is kept on a driveway or in a garage do not apply the handbrake. Instead leave the car in first gear if a manual or in park if an automatic. Alternatively put wooden chocks under the wheels.
- If the car has an electric handbrake check the car manual on how this can be locked off.
- Whilst the vehicle is laid-up corrosion can develop on the discs and cause the brakes to seize. Once a week, if it is safe to do so, move the car forward and backward to prevent brake seizure. (This will also ensure the tyres do not develop flat spots.)

✓ TYRES

- Tyres lose pressure over time so inflate them to the maximum recommended pressures. This information can be found in the car's manual or on a sticker on the driver's door pillar or the fuel flap.



LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

✓ MOT

- To help ensure all but essential travel the Department of Transport announced that from 30th March car owners have a six-month MOT exemption.
- This extends the renewal date by six months. The vehicle can still be taxed, the insurance remains valid and the DVLA database will be updated.
- But get the car booked in for a MOT as soon as it is safe to do so.

✓ SERVICING

- Despite the MOT extension all cars must be kept in a roadworthy condition. An unroadworthy vehicle is unsafe and the driver will be liable for prosecution.
- Garages have been classified as an essential service. Many remain open and offer a collect and return service with their transfer staff wearing protective clothing.
- When a car is returned wipe down the keys and interior touch points with disinfectant.

✓ WARRANTIES

- For information on what support manufacturers are providing look at www.whatcar.com/news/what-are-car-companies-doing-to-help-me-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/n21257

✓ INSURANCE

- If the car can be parked in a garage check with the insurance company if they offer laid-up cover which will have a reduced premium.

✓ CAR TAX EXEMPTION

- If a car is parked off the road and will not be driven on public roads it can be declared SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notice).
- No road tax is required, and any remaining tax can be reclaimed.
- This notification can be done online by visiting this DVLA website www.gov.uk/make-a-sorn

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