

A man wearing a black winter jacket, a black beanie, and glasses is smiling while shoveling a large pile of snow. He is using a red-handled shovel. The snow is being thrown into the air, creating a spray. In the background, there are snow-covered trees and a house with a snow-covered roof. The sun is shining brightly in the upper left corner, creating a lens flare effect. The entire image has a green gradient overlay at the bottom.

Driving in Finland in winter



Finnish Road Safety Council
LIKENNETURVA

Before you drive

Plan your route – prefer main roads.

Conditions in Finland might be different than you are used to.

Don't rely solely on internet route planners etc. They can plot a route appearing shorter, but going through lesser roads which in winter can be heavily coated in snow and impassable – even with a 4x4.

Check the weather forecast and take possible warnings seriously: avoid driving in extreme weather conditions.

Check where you can stop for fuel, food and rest along the way.



Before you drive

Make sure your vehicle is prepared for winter.

Winter tires are mandatory in Finland in winter months.

Clear your car of ice and snow from the hood, roof, windows, mirrors and lights.

Keep a snow brush and an ice scraper in the car. A snow shovel is a good idea too.

Know your AC settings. Use your AC to clear foggy windows.





On the road

Reach your destination safely.

Wear your seatbelt. This applies to all passengers.

Keep your full attention on the road. Do not use your phone when driving.

Only drive when sober. DUI is a crime.

Do not drive when tired.

Know the traffic rules – In Finland we drive on the right.

Follow the speed limits. Drive at speed that is safe for the weather and road conditions.

Keep a safe following distance.



On the road

Think before you stop. Do not stop on the road for photos. Stop only at a safe space – like a rest stop.

If you are driving at a slower speed and a queue is forming behind you, it is polite to pull over e.g. to a rest stop and let them drive past.

Stay on your own lane. Some roads are narrow and require keeping as far right as possible.

Off-road driving is forbidden. Respect road closures and private roads.



When visibility is poor

Use your lights.

Turn your headlights on, don't rely on 'Auto' settings. If only daytime running lights are on, the taillights are off. Especially in low-light conditions it is important that the taillights are on.

When it is dark, use high-beams on unlit roads.

Don't dazzle. Switch to low-beam lights when a vehicle approaches or you are driving close behind a vehicle to avoid blinding the other driver.

In case of an accident

Be prepared and stay safe.

Keep a flashlight, a reflective vest and something warm to wear in the car.

If your car breaks down or you have an accident, turn on the warning lights and set up the warning triangle.

If you need help, call 112 or place the call through the 112 Suomi mobile app. It transmits your location information to the emergency services.



Mind the wildlife

Take wildlife warning signs seriously.

The signs are located in high wildlife use areas. When driving in signed areas, stay extra vigilant and reduce your speed.

Between dusk and dawn, when light levels are low, animals are often active.

Watch out for reindeer when driving in the reindeer husbandry area.

If you hit a reindeer or a wild animal, call 112.



Know the traffic rules

Respect the road signs.

There are several different signs indicating that you are not allowed to go into a particular area or road.

On the right top down some of them:

- Closed to all vehicles.
- No power-driven vehicles.
- No entry.





Driving in poor conditions

Snow, sleet and ice can cause extremely dangerous road conditions in Finland. In winter the weather can change rapidly so stay on top of weather reports.

In foul weather slow down and increase your following distance.

Avoid sharp steering and harsh braking manoeuvres.

Don't become a road hazard

If you are on the lookout for northern lights, sights or your hotel, keep your safety and the safety of others in mind.

Keep your eyes on the road at all times.

Do not stop your vehicle in the middle of the road. Stop or park in designated turn off areas or other spots surely to be safe for stopping.

Do not leave your car unlit on the road.



Travelling with children?

By law children under the height of 135 cm must use a child safety seat.

The Finnish Road Safety Council recommends that children travel in a booster seat until they reach a height of 150 cm.

