



# Winter Car Safety: The Proactive Protector's Guide

7 essentials to get you and your dog home safe (and mud-free) this season.

HappyPawsCo



## The perfect winter walk often begins with an imperfect car journey.

We love a crisp winter walk as much as anyone. The frost on the grass, the quiet woods, the excuse for a Sunday roast afterwards. It's brilliant.

But the travel bit? That's usually where the stress kicks in. It's dark by 4 pm, the roads might be wet, and the last thing you need is a stressed dog, a ruined car interior, or a traffic fine ruining the trip.

# This guide is built on experience, not just the Highway Code.

I'm Kyle, the founder of HappyPawsCo. I've loved dogs since I was 8 years old and know from experience that a bit of preparation makes the difference between a nightmare journey and a peaceful one.

We've put together this guide to share the practical tricks we use to keep our own pack safe, warm, and happy when the temperature drops.

Let's get on the road.



# 1

# The Restraint Rule: More Than Just Paperwork.

## The Reality

In a sudden stop on an icy road, an unrestrained dog becomes a heavy projectile. You wouldn't let a toddler loose on the back seat, and your fur baby is just as precious.



## The Legal Risk

Rule 57 of the Highway Code is there to prevent serious accidents. Failing to comply can lead to fines of up to £5,000 and could even invalidate your car insurance.

## The Protector's Playbook

- Treat their harness like their seatbelt. A crash-tested harness connected to a seatbelt tether is non-negotiable.
- Look for harnesses that distribute force across the chest, not the neck.
- \*\*Common Mistake\*\*: Regular walking harnesses are not designed for impact forces and can cause serious harm in a collision.

# 2

## Warm Up The Car First. A Simple Step for Their Comfort.

### Why It Matters

Cars are metal fridges in winter. A freezing surface can trigger joint pain in older dogs or spike adrenaline in anxious ones.

### The Protector's Playbook

- Warm the car for five minutes before loading your dog in.
- Ensure the back seats are warm to the touch.
- Keep a coat on short-haired breeds like Whippets or Staffies for the journey.
- **Pro Tip:** Don't blast hot air directly at them. Aim for a “cosy living room” temperature with good air circulation, not a “sauna”.



# 3 Give Anxious Dogs a Window Seat

## The Problem with Being Low Down

Winter travel is darker and noisier. If your dog can't see out, these sensations are disorienting and can lead to whining, panting, or car sickness. A sliding dog is a panicking dog.

## The Protector's Playbook

- For smaller nervous travellers, an elevated booster seat is a game-changer. Being able to look out the window significantly reduces motion sickness.
- Look for raised seats with secure straps and harness-attachment clips to stop them from slipping, wandering, or lap-hopping.



# 4

## Pack Your 'Stuck on the M25' Kit

### Why You Need It

Breakdowns happen. If you're stuck on the hard shoulder for hours waiting for the RAC, your dog will get cold and thirsty very quickly.

### The Doggy Go-Bag Checklist



Warm blanket



Extra lead and collar



Long-lasting chew



High-visibility jacket  
or collar light



Water and a  
collapsible bowl



First aid basics & your  
vet's phone number



## 5 Beat the Invisibility Problem.

### The Dark Mornings Reality

In winter, an 'afternoon walk' can quickly become a 'pitch black walk'. If you stop for a comfort break at a dark service station, visibility is poor for you and other drivers.

### The Protector's Playbook

- Make them visible. When headlights hit reflective harnesses or leads, they light up, ensuring traffic sees your dog instantly.
- Extra Safety Layer: Keep a small LED torch or clip-on light attached to your bag. This helps you see them clearly in poorly lit car parks.



# 6 Win the Unwinnable Battle Against Mud.

## The UK Weather Reality

Mud, grit, and wet leaves are the enemies of your car's resale value. Damp seats that aren't dried properly will start to smell.

### The Waterproof Barrier Solution

- Catch mud, hair, and water.
- Have mesh windows for airflow (dries them off faster).
- Include door protection for muddy paw prints.
- Feature a hard base to prevent slipping.



### The 30-Second Rule

Clean and dry paws BEFORE they jump in. Keep pet wipes and a microfibre towel in the boot.

# 7 Deal with the Grit Factor.

## The Hidden Winter Danger

Rock salt and grit on roads is like sandpaper for paws and can cause chemical burns if left on.



### CRITICAL WARNING

**Don't let them lick their paws! Ingesting road salt is toxic. A quick wipe with a damp cloth before they jump back in saves your car seats and their tummy.**

## The Protector's Playbook

- Rinse or wipe paws immediately after walking on gritted roads.
- **Pro Tip:** Keep pet-safe paw balm in your car. It creates a protective barrier against salt and ice.



# Your Winter Go-To Gear: The Tools for a Peaceful Journey

These are the essentials we've curated to solve the biggest winter travel headaches.  
They are the exact products we use ourselves.

## For Safety



Kurgo Crash-Tested Car Harness & Reflective No-Pull Harness

## For Car Protection



Lite 3-Layer Car Seat Hammock & Flatbed

## For Anxious Travellers



Elevated View Dog Booster Seat

## For Emergencies



Mini Pet First Aid Kit, Foldable Double Travel Bowl & Stainless Steel Pet Water Bottle

Browse the full winter travel collection at [HappyPawsCo.co.uk](https://www.happypawscopy.co.uk) →

# Safe Travels from All of Us at HappyPawsCo.

Winter doesn't have to mean hibernation. With the right gear and a little prep, you can enjoy those frosty morning walks and festive visits without the stress.

Because you're now part of the pack, here's a welcome gift from us.



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# Your Quick Winter Journey Checklist.

Before you head out, run through these essentials.

- Dog properly restrained (crash-tested harness/crate)
- Car warmed up and comfortable temperature
- Emergency kit packed and accessible
- Water available for longer journeys
- High-visibility gear if travelling in dark
- Paws checked and clean before getting in car
- Route planned to minimise stops
- Phone charged in case of emergency

# Stay Connected.



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Safe & Sound, Home & Away

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Always consult your vet if you have concerns about your dog's health or behaviour.