

# ROAD TO SAFETY

## Prepare For Rough-Weather Driving Challenges

(NAPSA)—These simple tips from the National Safety Council can help you drive down your risk of accident, even in inclement weather:

**Floor Mats.** Something as simple as floor mats can have a major impact on driving safety. But the days of one-size-fits-all floor mats are gone.

Most mats, even aftermarket mats, are now designed for specific vehicles, and drivers should be sure to use only a mat designed for their vehicle. Many vehicles these days also have anchors or clips to secure mats. You should always check to make sure your mats are properly secured, especially after visiting the car wash.

Floor mats should never be flipped upside down and mats should never be doubled up. Improperly used floor mats may slip and interfere with the movement of pedals during driving and could cause an accident.

**Tires.** While today's all-weather and all-season tires are sufficient for winter-weather driving in most areas of the country, sometimes snow tires are necessary. In either case, tires should

be checked for wear and proper air pressure. Many have wear indicators.

If a wear indicator is showing or tire tread is below 1.6 mm (0.06 in.), the tire should be replaced.

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**Consider carrying such emergency equipment as tire chains, a window scraper, a bag of sand or salt, flares, a small shovel and jumper cables.**

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The same is true for snow tires. The effectiveness of snow tires is lost if the tread wears down below 4 mm (0.16 in.).

Tire air pressure should be checked only when tires are cold (vehicle parked for at least three hours) and should be set to recommended manufacturer levels. Under- or overinflated tires can result in excessive and uneven wear and poor handling.

**Windshield Wipers.** Months spent baking in the sun can have a severe impact on windshield wiper efficiency. Be sure to check for cracks and other damage and replace if necessary, rather than discover your wipers aren't up to the added challenges of winter driving.

**Oil and Other Fluids.** Check the oil level and level of other fluids. If you use heavier-viscosity oil for warm-weather driving, it may cause harder starting during the winter.

So check your owner's manual for the recommended type of oil to use during the cold-weather months. Make sure to use washer fluid containing antifreeze in cold climates and warm the windshield with the defroster before using the washer to avoid the washer fluid freezing on the windshield and blocking your vision. Ensure that engine coolant is at the recommended level.

**Battery.** Cold temperatures can reduce the capacity of any 12-volt battery, so inspect your battery to make sure it is in top operating condition. Check the battery for signs of corrosion, loose terminal connections, cracks and loose hold-down clamps.

**Emergency Equipment.** You should consider carrying some emergency equipment. Some of the things you might put in your vehicle include tire chains, a window scraper, a bag of sand or salt, flares, a small shovel and jumper cables.