

In The Driver's Seat

With A Little Preparation You Can Still Go In The Snow

by Bobby Hamilton

(NAPSA)—Getting ready for winter weather can help take the worry out of winter driving.

With a little work, you can drive more confidently on icy roads, and you'll be ready if you get stuck in the snow. And remember, if conditions are too hazardous, the best bet is to stay off the road.



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Follow these basic guidelines to enjoy a safer ride:

- **Go under the hood and make sure your car is in proper working order.** Check the battery, brakes, lights/hazards, heater and defroster.

Also, check the fluid level on your wipers and antifreeze.

- **Pack it up: Pack emergency supplies for the road, just in case you get stuck.** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests you have a flashlight, jumper cables, shovel, snow brush, ice scraper, warning devices (such as flares), blankets and a small bag of sand or cat litter to generate traction under wheels. And for long trips, it's a good idea to bring food and water.

- **Plan ahead: Allow plenty of time so you're not in a rush.** Watch television or listen to radio reports for the latest weather conditions. Try to travel in daylight hours and let others know the route you're taking.

- **Buy good winter tires:** While all-weather radials are fine in some areas, other locations require chains or snow tires with studs for safe driving. Make sure your tires have enough



Your winter-driving checklist should include your car's battery, brakes, lights, heater, defroster, fluid levels and antifreeze.

tread life. The Rubber Manufacturers Association suggests placing a penny, Lincoln head down, in the tread groove. Consider buying new tires if you can see all of Lincoln's head.

You may be able to save if you buy tires or other equipment through a service such as AutoVantage. Members of this organization can often save from 5 to 20 percent on car care at some 19,000 service locations.

- **Gas up: Keep your gas tank at least half full to keep from running out of gas if you get stuck.**

- **If you get stuck, stay put.** If your car gets stuck in ice or snow, stay in your vehicle. Don't leave the car to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards.

Bobby Hamilton is the current NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Champion after achieving four career NASCAR Winston Cup Series victories. He is also a spokesman for AutoVantage.

To learn more, visit www.auto.vantage.com or call 1-800-876-7787.