

SAFETY SENSE

Steer Clear Of Road Hazards

(NAPSA)—It may pay for consumers who shop for new convertibles to consider how they can overcome the possible road blocks open-topped vehicles can encounter.

“Visual sensory levels in a convertible are dramatically different during daytime driving, as compared to a hardtop,” says Volvo spokesperson, Roger Ormisher.

Ormisher’s company is considered by many to be makers of some of the safest cars in the world. The company recently introduced its C70 convertible.

“With the top down, there are virtually no obstructions to cause blind spots. Of course this means more direct sunlight, which can increase windshield glare and the need for sunglasses,” Ormisher says.

In addition, Volvo suggests convertible owners be aware of increased exposure to dust and dirt, which may affect their vision.

Ormisher says driving into areas of heavy shade, such as mountains or tree-lined streets, can affect visual acuity due to rapidly changing light. The same applies when driving through a tunnel. The shift from light to darkness to light again when entering such a situation can be unnerving if a driver is unprepared for it.

In addition, Volvo says nighttime driving can present concerns for motorists—especially new con-



Convertibles can be safe and fun to drive if motorists avoid a few road blocks to safety.

vertible drivers. “A driver’s visual acuity (in a top-down, nighttime driving environment with dashboard lights on) needs to be considered. Eyes need to shift from the glare of oncoming traffic, to darkness and to the instrument panel,” says Ormisher.

With the top down, noise levels can also increase. Additionally, the pitch and severity of sounds not heard in a closed car can be magnified in a convertible. The noise can be a distraction and an important safety issue.

To keep packages safe, convertible owners should use the trunk as much as possible. If items need to be stored on a seat, it’s a good idea to secure them with safetybelts.

“Driving a convertible can be an exhilarating experience,” says Ormisher, “however, the driver needs to approach that experience with respect for the car and the elements.”

For more information visit www.volvocars.com.