



Auto Safety Tips...Online!



Safety Tips For Winter Travel

Dave Lundell, Yahoo! Autos
(NAPSA)—Safety is a number one concern for those traveling to spend time with friends and family in the coming months. As more people are hitting the roadways instead of airways this year, maintaining and winterproofing cars, as well as buying the safest, most reliable cars has become ever more critical.

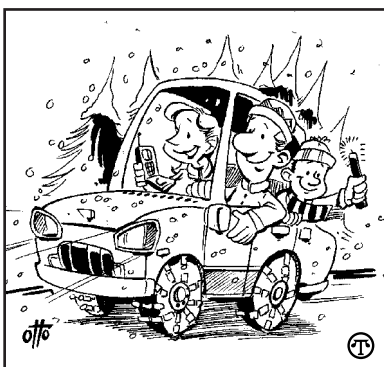
Safety is Top of Mind Among Buyers

According to an ongoing Yahoo! Autos poll, 82 percent of consumers are questioning their current cars and considering buying a new or used car this winter. During the winter season, style, speed and accessories are less vital to consumers when making purchasing decisions. Although the appearance of a car is indeed important, safety, reliability and price are the key factors that influence consumers' buying choices this season. In fact, 54 percent out of nearly 3,600 respondents from the poll stated that safety, reliability and price were the most important factors affecting their car purchasing decisions.

For consumers considering safety and durability over other features for the first time, the Internet can offer valuable resources. Automotive Web sites can arm consumers with essential research tools to help them make well-informed purchasing decisions and negotiate with dealers. Consumers can find everything from *Consumer Reports* safety information to vehicle pricing to financing options. All of this research and information helps consumers feel more comfortable when negotiating and making the best decision for their needs.

Car Maintenance is Critical

Drivers, young and old, hitting the road this winter, must take precautions to ensure safe road travel. Inclement weather and slippery roads can make travel tricky, so it is important to learn and practice proper auto maintenance. To prepare for an upcoming trip, drivers should always carefully plan their route in advance to avoid wrong



Know before you go: online research can help you feel safe and secure about your car and your travels.

turns and lost hours. It's also wise to check online sources, television reports and the radio to gain information on weather and road conditions. In case of inclement weather, drivers need to make sure to have all the emergency equipment available, such as snow chains, cell phones, flairs and flashlights.

Being prepared also requires regular upkeep, on-schedule maintenance and servicing that augment safety and durability. Many automotive Web sites like Yahoo! Autos (<http://autos.yahoo.com>) offer personalized services to help drivers flag and solve mechanical problems. Before packing up the family for a holiday road trip, it is important to conduct the **six-step maintenance check**: oil change, tire pressure, brakes, windshield wipers, headlights and defrosters. Drivers who may find themselves caught in the snow this winter should be sure to get snow tires put on their car well in advance so they aren't left in a blizzard.

For many this year, auto travel is the sole means of transportation. More than ever before, it's essential for drivers to familiarize themselves with online automotive resources that can help them make educated buying and car maintenance decisions. With the help of the Internet and regular auto maintenance, Americans can rest assured knowing that their cars are in good shape for safe road trips and focus on what really matters—family and friends.