

Safety Tips For Winter Driving

(NAPSA)—As winter approaches, it's important to prepare for the icy and snowy road conditions the season brings. Even if the weather is nice in the morning, you could end up in a storm by afternoon.

Below are 12 tips to help get you home safely this winter:

- Keep an emergency kit on hand, including: a flashlight, blanket, bag of sand or salt, extra washer fluid, a windshield scraper, jumper cables, tire chains or traction mats, food and water. Also, maintain at least a half a tank of gas at all times during the winter season.

- Take your car to a mechanic for a pre-winter inspection. In addition, check tires, wiper blades and fluid, and lights before getting on the road.

- Drive for the conditions. Slower speeds allow more time to react if something unexpected happens on the road.

- Allow for more room between you and other vehicles, especially for commercial vehicles that require more time to stop. Always give yourself enough space and time to move out of harm's way.

- Keep a firm grip on your steering wheel. Ruts in the road, heavy wind or ice may force you to make sudden, sharp moves that could cause you to lose control of your car.

- When you need to slow down quickly in slippery conditions, lightly pump your brakes—this reduces your chance of locking your tires and spinning out of control. However, if your car has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), it is recommended that you hold the brake down as far as possible in an emergency. The system prevents the wheels from locking, enabling you to steer around obstacles.

- Be aware of black ice, a thin layer of transparent ice that forms when the temperature is around the freezing point. Signs that patches of black ice have formed on



the road include ice build-up on mirror arms, the antenna or on the top corners of your windshield. Also, be wary of black ice when you no longer see spray from the tires of other vehicles, but the road still looks slightly wet.

- Use extra caution when approaching elevated structures such as bridges, because they usually freeze first and are not always treated with ice/snow melt materials.

- Obey all road signs. Authorities post this information with your safety in mind.

- If stranded or stuck, stay in your vehicle—it's easy to get confused in a bad storm, and you may end up lost. If stranded, keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow and open a downwind window slightly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. In addition, keep moving to stay warm and only run your engine for 10 minutes each hour.

- If conditions look bad, get off the road. Use your best judgment and listen to weather reports and warnings.

- Take extra caution when driving in mountainous areas, as the weather can be severe and change rapidly. Be ready for wind gusts and watch for emergency vehicles and snowplows. If possible, do not stop in avalanche zones.

Bad weather can hit unexpectedly. Always be prepared and react appropriately to help ensure a safe winter season. For additional driving safety tips, please visit www.roadway.com.