

# ROAD TO SAFETY

## Safety Starts Before You Put Your Foot On The Gas

(NAPSA)—Before you take your next road trip, take a turn at testing your safe driving IQ. Remember, good driving starts before you ever shift into drive. These tips will help steer you to safety.

- **Seat Belts**—According to the National Safety Council, an estimated 157,500 lives have been saved by safety belts over the last 20 years. Make sure you and your passengers are buckled up and that children are in a car or booster seat in accordance with state laws and that it is properly secured.

- **Secure Loose Objects**—You and the children are strapped in, so make sure luggage and packages are secure, too.

- **Adjustments**—Make adjustments to your side and rearview mirrors, your seat and steering wheel (if adjustable) before starting the car.

- **Music**—Searching through the glove box and CD cases for your favorite music takes your attention away from the road. If you don't have a changer, only change CDs when the vehicle is fully stopped.

- **Cellular Phones**—In the last five years alone, nearly 300,000 drivers have been involved in crashes attributed to cell phone use. Ideally, drivers should refrain from using cell phones. Many vehicles, such as the Toyota Prius and Lexus vehicles now come equipped with Bluetooth technology, which lets your cell phone interact with a microphone and speakers already installed in your vehicle. You don't even need an earpiece.

- **Check Over The Vehicle**—Incorrectly inflated or unevenly worn tires contributed to more than 20,000 serious auto incidents in 2003, according to the National



**HERE'S A GOOD STEER. Make a safety check before you start.**

Safety Council. Simply checking tire pressure and tread wear regularly can keep you from a hazardous situation on the road.

- **Know Where You're Going**—Planning out your trip before you ever get in the vehicle allows you to focus on your driving rather than concentrating on how to get there. Many vehicles now feature onboard navigation systems. Systems in Toyota and Lexus vehicles allow the driver to enter the destination's address and then follow the computer's voice prompts.

- **Stay Awake And Sober**—They've heard the tales of drunk drivers time and again, yet drivers continue to drink and drive. Doing so puts the driver, passengers, other drivers and pedestrians at risk. You should also avoid getting behind the wheel when tired.

- **Check Engine Warning Lights**—Taking a quick glance at the dashboard before leaving the driveway can save you time and major hassles on the road.

Remember, taking care of the little things before backing out of the driveway will help you stay focused on the task at hand—getting to your destination safely.