

SAFETY SENSE

Prepare For Cold-Weather Driving: Tips For Winter Road Warriors

(NAPSA)—Whether you're heading over the river and through the woods to grandma's house or just hitting the pavement during the daily grind this winter, it's important to prepare yourself and your vehicle for cold-weather driving.

"While most of us won't need tire chains or front-mount snow dozers in order to make it through winter weather, there are some things that everyone can do to ensure that old man winter doesn't leave them on the side of the road this season," says Jim MacPherson, car care expert and automotive radio host for WTIC-AM in Connecticut.

MacPherson has the following tips to help you prepare your vehicle for frigid temps and winter driving:

- **Kick the Tires:** As temperatures fluctuate, tire pressure can change. Make sure that your tires are properly inflated; low pressure can increase wear and fuel consumption, but overinflating can reduce traction in slippery conditions. "If you're not a do-it-yourselfer, many repair shops will check your tire pressure and adjust it as needed for free or very little cost," said MacPherson. It's also important to inspect your tire's tread and replace any balding tires before the roads get slick.

- **Slow Down for Warm-up:** Instead of hopping into your cold



Your cold-weather driving will take a turn for the better if you make sure your tires are properly inflated and your windshield wipers are not worn down.

vehicle and quickly starting and driving away, let your car warm up for about 30-60 seconds to ensure that your motor oil has time to flow properly. According to MacPherson, a good synthetic motor oil, like Mobil 1, is designed to flow quickly in lower temperatures and protects critical engine parts in every season.

- **Increase Visibility:** If your windshield wipers are worn down or smearing instead of clearing, it's a good idea to replace them before frost, freezing rain or snow stresses them more. Before winter weather hits, make sure you've got an ice scraper handy to clear off windows. "And don't forget to scrape headlights and taillights, too, so that other drivers can see

you better on the road," suggests MacPherson.

- **Pop the Trunk:** Prepare ahead of time for unexpected problems that can happen on the road. MacPherson suggests that you pack essential items in your trunk to help you weather the wait if your vehicle breaks down, gets stuck or is involved in an accident. "It's a good idea to keep a blanket, gloves, hat and small shovel handy," said MacPherson. "Jumper cables are also great to have in case a dead battery keeps you or a fellow driver out in the cold."

By thinking ahead and preparing your vehicle for winter-weather driving now, you can save yourself from being left out in the cold this season.