

# Safety Sense

## Staying Safe On The Roads

(NAPSA)—When it comes to staying safe on the roads, motorists may want to take a few cues from the experts: school bus drivers.

“Our drivers are trained to handle adverse conditions and know that preparation can make all the difference,” said Gary Catapano, senior vice president of safety for First Student, Inc., a company that transports 6 million students daily.

Here are a few of their tips for winter weather driving:

### **It Starts Under the Hood**

Starting buses on a frigid morning takes planning and preparation. Checking fuel, battery, tires, fluid levels and wipers should be part of regular safety and maintenance checks. Have your battery checked, so you don’t hear silence when putting the key in the ignition. Also, make sure wiper blades and defrosters are in good working condition. Check tire tread for wear and ensure tires are properly inflated for weather conditions.

### **Check Fluid Levels**

Keep your gas tank above half full; the extra volume can help reduce moisture problems within your fuel system and adds helpful weight to your vehicle. Check window washer fluid levels and consider keeping an extra jug as backup if the roads are sloppy.

### **Slow Down**

“To help prevent a collision on a snow-covered road, slow down and increase your following distance. If the road you usually travel is on a grade, avoid it and



**Slow down when driving on snow-covered roads.**

use an alternative route if possible,” said Catapano. A good rule of thumb is to reduce speed by 50 percent. Bridges and overpasses are more likely to ice over. Don’t assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble.

### **Prepare to Stop**

If you have to drive in the snow, test the road first. Check your brakes in a safe area to see how far it takes to stop. Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front, as appropriate for road conditions, to allow for sufficient time to stop when roads are snow covered or icy. When following a school bus, keep in mind they may make several stops and starts along their route, loading and unloading students. Laws in all states require motorists to stop when the school bus stop arm is extended and red lights are flashing.

During the colder months, be sure to use extra precaution when on the roads.

### **For More Information**

For more information, visit [www.firststudentinc.com](http://www.firststudentinc.com).