

# *Be Car Care Aware*™

## Winterizing Your Vehicle Can Save Cold Cash™

(NAPSA)—Preparing your vehicle for rough weather should be a top priority to reduce your risk of being out in the cold with the unexpected expense of emergency repairs.

“The thought of a breakdown, an engine not starting or otherwise being stranded is stressful as it is, but those things happening in freezing winter weather are extra stressful and costly,” said Rich White, executive director, Car Care Council. “An investment of an hour or two to have your vehicle checked is all it takes to have peace of mind and help avoid the cost and hassle of a breakdown.”

The council recommends the following steps:

- Clean, flush and put new antifreeze in the cooling system. As a general rule of thumb, this should be done every two years.

- Make sure heaters, defrosters and wipers work properly. Consider winter wiper blades and use cold weather washer fluid. As a general rule, wiper blades should be replaced every six months.

- Have the battery and charging system checked for optimum performance. Cold weather is hard on batteries.

- Check the tire tread depth and tire pressure. If snow and ice are a problem, consider special tires designed to grip slick roads. During winter, tire pressure should be checked weekly.

- Be diligent about changing the oil and filter at recommended intervals. Dirty oil can spell trou-

ble in winter. Consider changing to a “winter weight” oil. Have your technician check the fuel, air and transmission filters at the same time.

- If you’re due for a tune-up, have it done before cold magnifies existing problems such as pings, hard starts, sluggish performance or rough idling.

- Have the brakes checked. The braking system is the vehicle’s most important safety item.

- Have the exhaust system checked for carbon monoxide leaks, which can be especially dangerous during cold weather driving when windows are closed.

- Check to see that exterior and interior lights work and that headlights are properly aimed.

Motorists should also keep the gas tank at least half full at all times to decrease the chances of moisture forming in the gas lines and possibly freezing. Drivers should check the tire pressure of the spare in the trunk and stock an emergency kit with an ice scraper and snow brush, jumper cables, flashlight, flares, blanket, extra clothes, candles/matches, bottled water, dry food snacks and any needed medication.

The Car Care Council is the source of information for the “Be Car Care Aware” consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers. For a copy of the council’s “Car Care Guide” or for more information, visit [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org). You can also call (240) 333-1088.