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FOR APPROVAL

8 Things to Know if You Become Stranded in Your Car

The Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin offer the following winter driving tips.

MADISON, Wisconsin (November 21, 2005) –Wisconsin winters can be severe and often cause unsafe driving conditions.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, more than 70 percent of deaths during winter storms are caused in automobiles. The following tips from the Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin can help you get to your destination safely and keep you safe in the event that your car becomes disabled.

Before you even get in your vehicle, plan your route and allow plenty of time to reach your destination. Check the weather, have maps and directions, and let others know your route and estimated time of arrival. If you do get stranded:

1. Stay with your car and tie brightly colored cloth to the antenna.
2. Move anything you need from the trunk to the passenger area, including your Winter Car Kit. The kit should include a small bag of sand, blankets, flashlight, first aid kit, jumper cables, brightly colored cloth, and extra clothing.

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3. If you have a cell phone, call authorities and tell them your location. Only make necessary calls to conserve your cell phone battery.
4. Wrap your entire body, head to toe, in extra clothing/blankets.
5. Stay awake.
6. Don't eat snow because it lowers your body temperature.
7. Run the motor and heater for about 10 minutes every hour, with a window open slightly. Make sure snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe.
8. Move arms and legs to improve circulation and huddle with other people for warmth.

Other safety issues to consider when you are driving this winter include:

- Give snowplows room to work. Slow down and put at least three car lengths between your vehicle and the snowplow. Don't try to pass the snowplow. Stay alert! Remember a snowplow weighs 17 times more than your car.
- Turn on your headlights and don't use cruise control when road conditions are compromised by ice or snow.
- Review your car insurance policy to make sure that you have towing or Emergency Road Service coverage. Make sure you have the numbers handy, either in your glove compartment or programmed into your cell phone.

For more information about winter driving safety or to locate a PIA member near you, look for the PIA logo or go to www.PIAW.org.

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