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FOR APPROVAL

Protect Your Family By Preparing for Winter Driving Conditions

The Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin offer the following tips for winterizing your car.

MADISON, Wisconsin (November 21, 2005) – While Wisconsin residents are tuning up their snow blowers and dusting off their shovels, they should also be preparing their cars for winter driving and reviewing safe winter driving practices. The following winter safety tips come from the Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin.

You should always carry a first aid kit, properly inflated spare tire, jumper cables, snow brush, and ice scraper in your car. During the winter, you should also carry a winter car kit that includes:

- A small bag of sand or cat litter to use under your tires for traction.
- A shovel to clear snow from around your tires and tow rope.
- A large flashlight, extra batteries, cell phone, maps, and a compass.
- Blankets, extra winter clothes, boots, and brightly colored cloth.
- Non-perishable food items (protein bars, etc.) and bottled water.

Some retailers sell “pre-packaged” winter car kits and can be found on-line by doing an internet search for “winter car kit.”

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It is also a good idea to take the following steps to prevent winter driving problems:

- Get your battery tested: During the winter months, your car battery works harder. The older the battery, the better the chance it will fail once the temperature drops.
- Check your fluids: Keep your gas tank at least half full. Check your antifreeze, oil, transmission, brake, battery, and power steering fluid. Fill or change them as needed. Replace windshield washer fluid with a wintertime mix that won't freeze.
- Check tire tread by inserting a penny into the groove, placing Lincoln's head upright. If the top of his head shows, the tire is too worn. Worn and low-pressure tires do not provide adequate traction on icy pavement, so check often to make sure your tires are properly inflated.
- Changing weather conditions cause wiper blades to wear down faster and become ineffective. Replace them each fall. Also, be sure the heater and defroster are working properly.
- When you drive through slush and water after a snowfall or thaw, dirt from standing water can get between brake components, causing brakes to wear out faster. Make sure your brakes are in good working order.

Be sure to schedule your car's winter check up soon. For more information about winter driving safety or to locate a PIA member near you, look for the PIA logo in your yellow pages under insurance agent or go to www.PIAW.org.

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