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Vehicle preparation is the key to safe winter driving

Edmonton... With Alberta's unpredictable weather, preparation is the key to safe winter driving. During winter, motorists are faced with hazards such as snow, black ice, freezing rain, poor visibility and overall cold temperatures. Getting the vehicle prepared for winter should be a priority for drivers throughout the province.

Winterizing a vehicle helps ensure it will start and run well

Get a complete tune-up to make sure the vehicle's battery, brakes, ignition, alternator, cooling system, heater and rear defroster, oil, belts, hoses, radiator, exhaust system, windshield wipers and lights are checked and working properly. Make sure tires are in good condition and have adequate tread. Check and equalize the tire pressure as it will decrease in colder weather. Both under-inflation and over-inflation of tires can reduce their gripping action, and the tire tread will not be able to meet the road surface as it is designed to do. Consider the following precautions to further prepare the vehicle for winter driving conditions:

- Buy heavy-duty windshield wipers if living or driving in an area that receives heavier snowfall.
- Place extra weight in the rear of the vehicle (for rear-wheel drive vehicles) to increase traction. Use care if the weight is unsecured since it can shift while moving or if the driver has to stop suddenly.
- Use snow tires for the best traction in winter months. Snow tires are made of soft material and have a unique tread that provides better traction.

In case of an emergency

For the safety and comfort of the driver and passengers, ensure there is an emergency road kit in the vehicle that includes:

- basic tools (screwdriver, wrench, etc.)
- blankets, extra clothing and footwear
- booster cables
- candle in a deep tin and water proof matches
- coins for the telephone
- emergency (non-perishable) food supplies
- first aid kit
- flashlight with extra batteries
- flares or a reflective triangle
- gas-line antifreeze
- ice scraper and snow brush
- inflated spare tire and jack
- road map
- sand, road salt or kitty litter
- shovel
- tire chains
- tow chain or rope
- water container

Cell phone owners should make sure the batteries are fully charged and always carry an extra battery when travelling.

For information about traffic safety, contact the Traffic Safety Initiative at (780) 422-8839 or visit www.saferoads.com.

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Media enquiries may be directed to:

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