



AutoZone's Essential Tips for Safe Winter Travel

December 1, 2004

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Dec 1, 2004 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- The holiday season is a great time to travel, and never a good time for car trouble. So, before you hit the road for the holidays, check out these Winter Driving Safety tips from AutoZone.

Prepare for emergencies. This time of year it's always a good idea to keep an emergency kit in your trunk -- especially if you'll be traveling by car during the holidays. Essential items to have on hand include:

- a first aid kit
- a flashlight (with new batteries, of course)
- a set of jumper cables
- spare fuses
- a tool kit
- a safety triangle
- a can of tire inflator/sealant

You will also need a raincoat or poncho and a blanket or tarp, just in case you have to make some repairs in inclement weather.

Check your spare tire. Removing your spare to make room for extra gifts is never a good idea. Make sure your spare tire is in place and properly inflated. Your car jack and lug wrench should be there, too, and you should know how to use them. Instructions can be found in your vehicle's owner's manual.

More Winter Maintenance Tips From AutoZone

Winter weather conditions are often blamed for postponing vehicle maintenance, but some jobs simply shouldn't be delayed until warmer weather. Here's a list of winter car tips from AutoZone.com that can help keep your car running trouble free.

Replace your old battery. When the temperature drops below freezing, the cranking power of your battery drops by 33 percent. Check the Cold Cranking Amps (or CCAs) on your battery label and make sure your battery can handle the extra stress. And if your battery is more than four years old, odds are slim that it will make it through another winter. If there's any doubt, bring it to AutoZone for a free battery test.

Replace wiper blades. Snow and ice easily damage or destroy the wiping surface of a wiper blade, making vision difficult and travel treacherous. Carrying a spare set of blades, and changing them at least every six months, is simple insurance that you can always see your best.

Add fuel system antifreeze. Built-up moisture in your car's fuel lines can freeze in cold weather, leaving you stranded. Keep moisture out of your car's fuel system by regularly pouring fuel system antifreeze into your fuel tank.

Replace your burned-out lights. With longer nights this time of year, most drivers will be spending more time driving in the dark! Make sure your headlights, taillights and turn signals are all working properly. Remember to replace lights in pairs; if one bulb fails, odds are that the other bulb won't be far behind.

Carry an ice scraper and windshield de-icer. Seeing clearly is critical for safety, and your heater and defroster may not be enough to clear ice and snow off your windows. A good ice scraper and windshield de-icer can clear off thick ice and help keep it off.

Replace your dirty air filter. Put simply, dirt will send your engine to an early grave. In fact, as little as two aspirin tablets worth of dirt in your engine can cause more wear than 75,000 miles worth of normal driving. So, if it's been 12 months or 12,000 miles* since you replaced your air filter, it's time for a change!

Change your oil every 3,000 miles*. Changing to a lighter weight of oil in the winter can help your engine start more dependably. A heavy weight oil is thicker and harder for your engine to circulate in colder weather, which can leave engine parts unprotected at start-up.

On behalf of the more than 49,000 AutoZoners across America, have a safe and happy holiday season.

* For peak performance and maximum fuel efficiency, follow the replacement intervals above. Actual replacement intervals vary by vehicle, and are largely affected by driving conditions and personal driving habits, so refer to your owner's manual for the specific maintenance recommendations for your vehicle.

About AutoZone:

As of August 28, 2004, AutoZone sells auto and light truck parts, chemicals and accessories through 3,420 AutoZone stores in 48 states plus the District of Columbia in the U.S. and 63 AutoZone stores in Mexico and also sells the ALLDATA brand automotive diagnostic and repair software. On the web, AutoZone sells diagnostic and repair information through <http://www.alldatadiy.com> and auto and light truck parts through <http://www.autozone.com>.

SOURCE AutoZone, Inc.

Media, Ray Pohlman, +1-901-495-7962, or ray.pohlman@autozone.com , or Financial, Brian Campbell, +1-901-495-7005, or brian.campbell@autozone.com , both of AutoZone, Inc.

<http://www.autozone.com>