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Winter can be an unforgiving season. Freezing temperatures coupled with snow and ice can take its toll on people who live in climates where cold weather is a fact of winter life. While winter can test people's patience, it also can be harsh on cars and trucks. Understanding what components of a vehicle can be compromised by dropping temperatures and snowy roads can help drivers take action to safeguard their automotive investments. While the Canadian Automobile Association notes that winter can wreak havoc on just about every part of a vehicle, there are some parts that seem to bear the brunt of Old Man Winter's abuse. Properly servicing and caring for a car or truck can help. Drivers should take their vehicles for a tuneup and inspection before wintry weather arrives. A mechanic will examine the car battery and check antifreeze levels and make sure that the thermostat, defroster, brakes, and even wiper blades are working effectively. Have the tires inspected for adequate tread, which can make navigating roads safer. If the treads are worn, replace the tires. In addition to visiting their mechanics, drivers can perform some inspections and fixes themselves. • Check that all of the vehicle's lights are operational so your car can be easily seen during inclement weather. Exchange your existing windshield washer fluid with one that will not freeze in cold conditions. Check the nozzles on the windshield-washer system routinely and clear out any blockages of ice or debris. While addressing windshield washer fluid, also replace worn out windshield wiper blades with ones that can withstand snow and icy weather. • A new coating of wax can serve as a shield against road salt, snow, sleet, and rain. Try a polymer wax to protect the paint. Whenever possible, rinse off salt and grime so it does not dry on the car and gradually wear away at the paint. Some drivers mistakenly believe that salt stops being a problem once it dries simply because moisture is the active ingredient for a corrosive reaction. But humidity in

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HEADLIGHTS MAKE FOR SAFER DRIVING, EVEN DURING THE DAY (MS)- If asked to describe a typical car accident, many people would instantly think of nighttime. But statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicate that less traffic accidents occur at nighttime than daytime, when there are more vehicles on the road and more pedestrians walking around. Such statistics highlight the emphasis drivers must place on ensuring their vehicle is as safe during the daytime as it is at night. One of the most effective and easiest ways to make a vehicle safer during the day is to install daytime running lights, or DRLs, on your vehicle. Studies have shown that DRLs can reduce multiple-vehicle daytime crashes by as much as 11 percent. Such lights are essentially headlights that are lit whenever a vehicle is running, and they have proven especially effective at preventing daytime head-on and front-corner collisions by making it easier for motorists to see a vehicle, particularly as it approaches from far away. Many countries, including Canada and parts of Europe, now require vehicles to operate with lights on during the daytime. As more and more motorists recognize the value of DRLs, the technology associated with daytime running lights continues to address previous deficiencies. Whereas most daytime running lights are still based off the car's headlamps, ultimately causing the lamps to wear out too soon, Philips LEDDaylight DRLs are based on high-powered LUXEON(R) Rebel LEDs, which project a powerful, bright white light and boast a wider beam than the average LEDDRL, making a vehicle more visible to fellow motorists as well as pedestrians. In addition, the Daylight DRLs allow drivers to switch from using their standard headlights to an LEDlight source during the daytime, extending the life of the headlights while drawing less power from the vehicle. Auto enthusiasts have even noted the aesthetic appeal of the DayLight DRLs, which can be easily installed to instantly provide a stylish look that was once exclusive to expensive, high-end luxury vehicles. In addition to installing daytime running lights, drivers can take additional steps to improve their visibility during the daytime hours. \* Inspect signal lamps. Check all turn and stop lamps to make sure the bulbs are working and the lamps are not cracked. \* Routinely inspect and replace worn out wiper blades. Wiper blades need to be changed every season or on 3 month intervals. The rubber blade gets brittle and does not work well, robbing drivers of needed visibility when it rains or snows. \* Top off windshield washer fluid. Make topping off your windshield washer fluid part of your routine vehicle maintenance so you know you will have it when you need to clean the windshield. \* Clean interior glass and mirrors. Clean the vehicle's interior glass to remove any film buildup that can reduce vision and create a hazy reflection from the sun. For smokers that film can be even thicker. \* Check your mirrors. Keep rearview and side mirrors clean and adjust them properly so you can see all of the views around the back of your car, especially the blind spots along both sides of the vehicle. This will help you to change lanes and make turns with more confidence and less stress. \* Avoid decorative interior accessories. Don't hang trinkets, fuzzy dice and other items from the rearview mirror, as these can become a distraction and possibly prevent you from seeing fellow motorists. More information from Philips is available at www.daylight-led.com.

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(MS)- Millions of motor vehicle accidents occur each year. While the motor vehicle industry places a great emphasis on safety, it's ultimately up to motorists to ensure their vehicle is as safe as possible. Mirrors are an often overlooked aspect of safe driving. Properly adjusted rearview and side view mirrors improve visibility by reducing blind spots, which in turn reduces a driver's risk of being in an accident, especially on multi-lane highways where drivers may be forced to keep tabs on fellow motorists on both sides of their vehicles. When adjusting mirrors, consider the following tips to ensure your vehicle is as safe as possible.

\* Ensure optimal visibility from the interior rearview mirror. A properly adjusted rearview mirror allows drivers to see what's alongside and behind them, improving road awareness while reducing the risk of an accident. Most drivers know the rearview mirror should allow them to see out of the rear window from the driver's seat. But it's also important to utilize the day/night switch found on most rearview mirrors. Such a switch isn't an unnecessary accessory, but one that can reduce glare from cars behind you at night. Just be sure to flip the switch back to the daytime setting in the morning to ensure maximum visibility.

\* Firmly secure the rearview mirror. Unfortunately, rearview mirrors are not always sturdy, as many vehicle manufacturers attach the rearview mirror to the windshield with a special button that is glued to the glass at the factory. This glue can come undone when drivers hit a pothole or just gradually weaken thanks to the ravages of heat, humidity or cold weather.

When a rearview mirror comes unglued, drivers often look to a quick, yet temporary, solution like super glue or a high-strength adhesive. Such quick fixes are ineffective over the long haul, and drivers might find themselves driving down the street without a rearview mirror. Permatex(R) Rearview Mirror Adhesive was designed specifically for motorists looking for a permanent fix that ensures the rearview mirror will stay attached to the windshield regardless of external factors like the weather or poor road conditions. The adhesive employs a special formula that can easily withstand changing weather conditions and the thermal expansion that typically renders other glues and adhesives useless.

\* Don't overlook side view mirrors. A 1995 study from the Society of Automotive Engineers noted that, when positioned correctly, side view mirrors can help drivers see vehicles in their blind spots, eliminating a driver's need to glance over his or her shoulder when changing lanes. When adjusting the driver's side mirror, place the side of your head against the window, then adjust the mirror until the side of your vehicle comes into view. To adjust the passenger's side mirror, sit in the driver's seat, and then lean to the right so that your head is in the car's centerline. Adjust the mirror until the side of your vehicle comes into view.

Once your mirrors have been adjusted and the rearview mirror is firmly secure, don't forget to use each of these mirrors when driving. Many drivers rely solely on their rearview mirrors to back up and change lanes on the highway. However, if all of your mirrors are aligned correctly, you should be able to see a vehicle leave the rearview mirror and move to one of the side view mirrors immediately. Diligent use of each mirror can help prevent accidents that occur when drivers change lanes.

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HOW TO SAFELY NAVIGATE WET ROADS

Fall is a great time of year to hit the open road, as fall foliage is colorful and provides a wonderful backdrop for weekend getaways, while the mild temperatures of fall make this an ideal time to enjoy the great outdoors. Though autumn is often a mild time of year with regard to weather, fall foliage enthusiasts can still encounter adverse conditions on road trips. According to the automotive group AAA, wet pavement contributes to nearly 1.2 million traffic accidents each year. When combined with fall leaves, wet pavement poses an even greater threat to drivers and their passengers. Autumn and precipitation do not necessarily go hand in hand, but drivers should still exercise caution during the fall road trip season so they can better handle roadways that are wet and covered in fallen leaves.

- Do not use cruise control. Because fall foliage can be so stunning to experience, many drivers are tempted to use the cruise control feature on their automobiles so they can pay more attention to the array of colors at their disposal. But cruise

control should never be engaged when driving on wet roads or roads that may be covered in leaves. Such conditions require drivers to focus their undivided attention on the road ahead of them. When drivers suddenly encounter slick roads, easing off the accelerator rather than quickly applying the brakes can be the safest response, but such a response is impossible when cruise control is engaged.

- Drive slowly. Many fall road trippers are already driving slowly so they can fully enjoy the fall scenery. But it's important that drivers slow down even more when encountering wet roadways, as driving slow can reduce the risk of a vehicle hydroplaning. When vehicles hydroplane, they slide uncontrollably on wet surfaces as the tires rise up on the water covering the roads. AAA notes that tires on vehicles driving as slow as 35 miles per hour can still lose some contact with the road, so drivers should maintain low speeds when driving on wet roads and reduce their speeds even further during heavy rains.
- Resist the urge to brake quick-

ly. When drivers feel themselves losing control, many respond by braking quickly. But hard braking and quick turns can increase the risk that a vehicle will hydroplane. And even if the vehicle does not hydroplane, motorists may have a hard time controlling it when slamming on the brakes. When encountering wet roads, brake slowly and maintain low speeds until the roads dry off.

- Leave ample room between vehicles. Because braking quickly on wet roadways can increase the risk of accident, it's important that drivers leave ample room between their vehicles and the vehicles in front of them. Afford other drivers the space to brake slowly just like you hope the drivers behind you are doing. Avoid overcrowded roadways during especially wet weather. Wet conditions during fall road trip season can be dangerous, and it's important that drivers learn to navigate wet roadways safely. Wet weather can quickly compromise drivers' visibility, and it's imperative that drivers know how to safely navigate wet roads.



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DIAGNOSING A LEAKY CAR

Very often drivers find that the seats or the mats below their feet are damp or downright sopping wet. But unless a window or sunroof was left open during a rainstorm, drivers may find it difficult to decipher why their vehicles are suddenly soaked. Unfortunately, when a vehicle's interior is wet, that could be a sign of a significant problem, one that can gradually worsen over time. Wetness can cause electrical components or metal structures in the car to rot, and a soggy interior may eventually be overcome by mold. It is best to find out what is causing the leak as soon as possible and have the problem fixed just as quickly.

Finding the source of a leak is not always easy. Sometimes drivers can locate it themselves and then fix the problem on their own, while more serious problems might need to be handled by a professional. But it is best to assess the situation before booking an appointment with your mechanic.

Cars can spring a leak for a variety of reasons. Leaks from systems under the hood, as well as rainwater or water from washing the car, can infiltrate the interior if seals around doors and/or windows are broken or gaskets are worn out. Figuring out which type of liquid is entering your

vehicle can help you determine what's behind the leak. A clear, slippery liquid under the seats may be indicative of a leak in the brake fluid reservoir. Brake fluid is a liquid used in the braking system to apply hydraulic pressure from the master cylinder to the calipers to the pads against the wheel drums. If you discover brake fluid, check the master cylinder or the clutch master cylinder to see if there is a leak or spillover of the fluid.

Coolant also can leak under the dashboard and into the foot wells of a car. Coolant is a sticky, green and sweet-smelling fluid, and a coolant leak could mean that a heater core or hose in the cooling system is leaking. In such instances, hoses may need to be replaced.

Some vehicles have water diverters on the sides of their windshields to make sure water flows off of the windshield when the wipers are in use. Also, the trough where the wipers rest should have a sealant that prevents water from entering at the base of the windshield. Over time, both can wear out and may need to be replaced and resealed. Try sitting in the car on a dry day and spraying a hose on the windshield. See if any water eventually makes it inside of the car. If it does, the wind-

shield is likely the reason your vehicle's interior is getting wet. A clogged drain in a vehicle's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is one of the more common causes of interior water damage. If the drain is clogged, condensation from the system cannot drain from the tube. In such instances, water backs up into the system and can actually blow out of the car vents or elsewhere in the vehicle, forming a pool on the floor of the car. Leaves or debris can cause a blockage. If excess water is left in the HVAC system, it can damage the blower motor. Also, a faulty seal that is located between the HVAC case and the firewall of the vehicle may cause water to leak into the passenger compartment under the carpet.

In some cases, cleaning blocked drains in a vehicle's HVAC system may be as simple as blowing compressed air through the vents or using a wire to clear out leaves or dirt. Other times it may be hard to access the leaks, and such instances are often best left to a mechanic. The causes of leaks in a car are not always so easy to diagnose. But it is important to figure out where the water is coming from early on to minimize the damage water can do to your vehicle.

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Winter can be a beautiful time of year, particularly when freshly fallen snow blankets the landscape. However, winter is also a time fraught with potential peril. The same winter weather that makes landscapes so pristine can make roads and walkways - and even being outside - dangerous. The U.S. Department of Transportation says weather-related vehicle crashes killed 6,253 people last year and injure more than 480,000 per year. These accidents most often occur when roadways are wet, snowy or icy. Yet, winter driving is not the only seasonal hazard. Here are some common winter activities and how to avoid getting hurt when engaging in them.

**DRIVING**

Exercise extra caution when driving on roadways during the winter, as they may contain ice or snow. All it takes is a small coating of precipitation on roadways to make driving treacherous. Wet-looking roadways may be wet, or they may be covered by ice, and it's difficult to tell the difference with the naked eye. Always slow down and assume you are driving on ice. Make every effort to

improve visibility. This includes checking windshield washer fluid levels and ensuring windshield blades are in good working order.

**SNOW REMOVAL**

Shoveling or removing snow by various methods can be strenuous work, taking even those who feel they are in good shape by surprise. A 2011 study conducted by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital found that an average of 11,500 snow-shoveling-related injuries and medical emergencies were treated in U.S. emergency departments each year from 1990 to 2006.

Lower back injuries, falls, injuries to the arms and hands and cardiac-related injuries account for many of the incidents sustained while removing snow. There's also the risk of injury from collisions with pedestrians and snow plows. Plows and bobcat-type devices can cause serious injury. Exercise caution when operating such machines.

**ROOF SNOW REMOVAL**

Removing snow from a roof can be a dangerous prospect. Always use the appropriate equipment,

which includes telescoping poles, rather than climbing on slippery roofs. This may be a job best left for a professional, who will have fall-arrest systems and nonslip safety boots.

**DRESSING FOR CONDITIONS**

Venturing outdoors for winter fun may be enticing, but never put your health at risk for the sake of fun. The Mayo Clinic says hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, causing a dangerously low body temperature. Wear appropriate clothing to prevent hypothermia, which may not produce any initial symptoms. If shivering stops or confusion and slurred speech set in, severe hypothermia is in effect and a person should be moved indoors and gently warmed. Mild hypothermia is also possible indoors, typically when the elderly spend several hours in poorly heated homes. Winter may be beautiful, but it also can be hazardous. Taking precautions and using common sense help avoid dangerous situations.

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### WINTERIZING VEHICLES ARE AN IMPORTANT STEP FOR DRIVERS

As fall gradually gives way to winter, vehicle owners often sigh at the thought of driving in winter weather or spending week-day mornings clearing their vehicles of ice before heading to the office. But manning the wheel through another snowstorm or whittling away another night's worth of ice from a car's windshield are not the only rites of passage motorists must endure as cold weather returns.

Winterizing a vehicle can improve vehicle performance during a time of year that, in many locales, can be especially harsh on automobiles. Low temperatures make for less than ideal conditions for engines to run, while potholes left behind by snow plows can damage a vehicle's wheels and may even result in flat tires and a damaged suspension system. In addition, salt used to improve traction on roadways can cause rust. Short of moving to a locale with mild winters, there's little drivers can do to protect their vehicles from harsh winter weather. But winterizing a vehicle can prevent some of the more common issues drivers may encounter when the temperatures dip below freezing.

\* Take time out for your tires. Winter weather can limit traction, putting the safety of drivers and their passengers in jeopardy. When possible, avoid driving in the snow, and steer clear of roads where ice and black ice are known to form.

While such measures can greatly reduce your risk of being in an accident, you likely can't avoid driving entirely come the winter. Drivers who want improved traction from their tires throughout the winter

can purchase winter tires for their vehicles. Such tires can more effectively handle roads that are covered in snow and ice than all-season tires. Another way to improve traction during the winter months is to constantly monitor tire pressure, which decreases more rapidly when the weather is cold. Properly inflated tires provide better traction and protect against damage that may occur when driving over potholes.

\* Consider a low-viscosity oil in the winter. The owner's manual of your vehicle may recommend you use a lower viscosity motor oil to counter the dip in temperature that's synonymous with winter. When the temperatures outside fall, the oil inside your vehicle thickens, and a thicker oil won't circulate through the engine as well. This can cause engine problems because the engine won't be adequately lubricated. A low-viscosity oil is naturally thinner, so it may improve lubrication throughout the winter. The vehicle owner's manual should recommend oils based on climate. If not, talk to your mechanic about changing from the oil you use throughout the year to a low-viscosity alternative during the winter.

\* Inspect your vehicle before winter arrives. No one wants to be out on the road during the first snowstorm of the year only to discover certain components are not working properly. Belts and hoses, while durable, can be put through strenuous conditions during the winter months, so a close inspection of belts and hoses should be conducted in late fall. In

addition, windshield wipers are especially important in winter, when snowfall can drastically impact visibility. You will want your wipers working at full capacity once the winter begins, so replace older wipers (shelf life for standard wipers is typically one year) and use a de-icing windshield washer fluid to maximize visibility.

Another component that must be inspected is your car's battery. Many drivers have experienced a dead battery, which, in warm weather, is more of a nuisance than a health concern. In cold weather, a dead battery can threaten your health if you find yourself stranded in cold weather. Especially low temperatures can compromise a battery's power by as much as 50 percent, so have your battery inspected in late fall and replace it if it needs be.

\* Don't be caught off guard. Part of winterizing a vehicle is being prepared if the vehicle breaks down. Make sure you have extra washer fluid in your vehicle's trunk, and don't forget to include an ice scraper, snow brush or even a snow shovel in the trunk as well. A snow shovel may be necessary if you need to dig your car out if it's been buried somewhere other than your driveway. Other items to carry in your trunk include a blanket, a change of clothes, an extra hat, an extra pair of gloves, some nonperishable food, and a few bottles of water.

Winter can be especially harsh on automobiles. But drivers can take several preventive steps to ensure their vehicle is safe and sound on the roads this winter.

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(MS)- Many drivers feel less comfortable behind the wheel at night than they do during the day, when daylight makes it easier to see fellow motorists as well as pedestrians. Nighttime can compromise a driver's vision, and that reduced vision is a key factor in traffic fatalities, nearly half of which occur at night.

Though traffic accidents are a byproduct of a host of factors, headlamp clouding is one of them and a growing problem for many motorists. Vehicles equipped with plastic headlamp lenses can become hazed and yellowed from the effects of sunlight, ozone, road pollution and the chemicals used in car washes. When driving at night, cloudy headlamps combine with little or no natural light to decrease visibility and pose a significant safety threat to drivers, their passengers and fellow motorists. Drivers cannot increase the amount of natural light at night, but there are steps they can take to improve their nighttime visibility.

\* Address cloudy headlamps. Plastic headlamp lenses, especially as they age, reduce headlight output considerably, compromising nighttime vision and the safety of drivers and their passengers. But as potentially dangerous as cloudy headlamps can be, it's just as easy for drivers to address the issue before it becomes a problem. Employing an advanced technology that works with minimal effort, the Philips Headlight Restoration Kit is designed for do-it-yourselfers and can help restore headlight lenses to like-new condition in less than 30 minutes. In lieu of a costly headlamp replacement, the Philips Headlight Restoration Kit allows motorists to quickly and significantly improve the light output of their headlamps, taillights, turn signals and reflective lens covers.

\* Keep wiper blades fresh. Vision is already compromised at night, when the lack of natural light can make it difficult to see pedestrians or animals on the road. That visibility is only further compromised by brittle or ineffective wiper blades, which should be changed every 90-120 days to ensure optimal performance. Drivers who live in areas with heavy rain or snowfall should inspect their wiper blades more frequently, especially if there is pitting on the windshield.

\* Check the windshield washer periodically. The windshield washer is an often overlooked aspect of vehicle maintenance.

Unfortunately, it's typically too late by the time many motorists notice an issue with their windshield washer. Don't fall victim to a faulty windshield washer in the middle of a rainstorm or a blizzard. Inspect the windshield washer periodically to ensure it's working properly and keep the fluid level topped off so it's there when you need it.

\* Think ahead. In addition to addressing existing issues, drivers can take steps to ensure their nighttime visibility is protected over the long haul. The Philips Headlight Restoration Kit, for example, employs a protective UV coating that can prevent future clouding for up to two years. In addition to addressing the headlamps, consider how your visibility is likely to be affected during the worst possible snowstorm or on a night with torrential rains. Keep those conditions in mind when deciding whether or not to hang any fuzzy dice or other trinkets from your rearview mirror. While such items can add a touch of personality to your vehicle, the decreased visibility such items can cause is not worth the cost over the long haul.

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### HOW TO CHANGE A FLAT TIRE

Many drivers will experience a flat tire at some point in their lives. Flat tires can be a nuisance, especially if a flat leaves you stranded on the side of an empty road with little opportunity for passing traffic to help you. Knowing how to change your own tire can keep you from sitting on the side of the road waiting for a tow truck or fellow motorist.

There is no need to feel helpless when your vehicle gets a flat tire. Changing a flat tire is relatively easy and can take just a few minutes if you are prepared and know how to get the job done.

1. Turn on your emergency flashing hazard lights and pull the car safely over to the side of the road where you will not be in the path of traffic.
2. Try to find a level, stable surface so that the car will not roll.
3. Put the car in park and engage the emergency brake. Place bricks or wooden blocks under the tires on the opposite side to prevent the car from rolling.
4. If you have cones or flares, use them to make your vehicle more visible to fellow motorists. This can save you from being struck while changing the flat.
5. Connect the jack handle to the rest of the device. Slide the jack under a secure part of the car frame near the damaged tire.

6. Use a screwdriver to pry off the wheel cover or remove the hub cap to gain access to the lug nuts on the tire.

7. Use your tire wrench to find the side of the wrench that matches the size of the lug nuts. Turn the wrench counter-clockwise to loosen all the nuts. Loosen them until they can comfortably be removed all the way by hand.

8. Use long strokes when pumping the jack to reduce the effort you have to put. Lift the car up until the wheel clears the ground.

9. Remove the lug nuts and store them in a safe spot until later. Grasp the flat tire with both hands and pull it toward you until it clears the ends of the bolts. Roll the flat to the rear of the vehicle.

10. Lift the spare tire into place and slide it in completely over the bolts.

11. Replace the lug nuts and tighten them by hand.

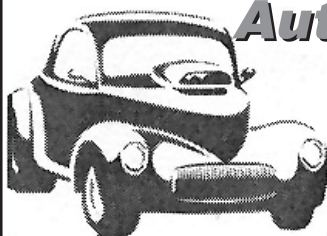
12. Carefully lower the vehicle and remove the jack. Tighten the lug nuts completely with the wrench. Then replace the wheel cover.

13. Put the flat in the trunk for proper disposal or repair later on.

14. Remove the blocks from your tires and disengage the emergency brake. You should now be ready to get back on the road.

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