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Taking The Pressure Off Cold Weather Driving

(NAPS)—Heavy snow and slick ice on the roads can be a white-knuckle experience for even the most experienced drivers if the automobile isn't properly outfitted for the weather.

While knowing proper driving techniques is important, a good set of winter tires can be the difference between getting where you have to go safely and feeling your heart leap into your throat as your car slides through an

ice-covered intersection.

So what do you need to know? Here's a list of commonly asked questions along with answers to help you understand how winter tires can help you.

What's the difference between "winter tires" and "snow tires"?

Winter tires are designed to work in all winter conditions, not just

snow. The tire compounds are optimized to provide grip even on dry roads in weather below 45° Fahrenheit. Also, winter tread patterns are designed to provide excellent grip in icy and snowy conditions.

Now, there is little difference between a studded tire and a winter tire without studs. For instance, Nokian Tyres, a Finnish company known for its expertise in developing and testing tires in demanding

road wear in relation to the typical studded tires of the '60s and early '70s. This new stud technology makes the tire extremely gentle on its driving surface, even while its winter

below this, the tire compounds harden in the cold weather and lose their ability to grip. Winter tires are designed to provide grip in colder temperatures. This is why they're "winter" tires, not "snow" tires—they provide

an. "Winter tires don't just combat snow and ice, they're specifically designed and tested to function better in areas where temperatures can drop down below freezing for months at a time."



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Can I use studded winter tires?

Studded winter tires were once perceived as loud and damaging to the road. However, through innovations in studding technology, the noise and road wear from the studs have been greatly reduced.

northern conditions, makes a winter tire, the Hakkapeliitta 8, that features a new tread pattern with 50 percent more studs than its predecessor. When compared to studded tires of the past, these modern studded tires cause only 20 percent

grip properties are better than ever before.

I don't get much snow, so why do I need snow tires?

In general, non-winter tires are designed for performance at 45° and above. When used in temperatures

increased safety in cold, not just snow. "The truth is, winter tires are engineered specifically to perform most effectively in harsh environments where colder temperatures are the norm," said Bernie Del Duca, president of North America for Noki-

Can't I just get two winter tires?

While this used to be the conventional wisdom, this creates the hazardous condition of having one axle that has grip while the other does not, resulting in an increased chance of a spin-out.

Will winter tires lower my gas mileage?

Gas mileage typically dips in the winter due to several factors. While winter tires may contribute, the effect is minimal; a decrease in gas mileage often has more to do with winter gas, which has special additives that affect engine performance. Roof racks and ski boxes add aerodynamic drag; these can also affect gas mileage.

Can I drive my winter tires all year round?

Using winter tires year round is not recommended.

Modern winter tires may wear unnecessarily quickly, particularly on coarse spring roads and on hotter summer roads. The wear may be uneven as well. Many tire dealers offer storage for off-season tires, making seasonal tire changing easy for drivers.

When should I put on my winter tires and when should I take them off?

In the fall, once temperatures are consistently at 45° or below, any driver will benefit from the grip of winter tires. It may make sense to put them on a bit early

to avoid the tire changeover rush that happens once the first snowfall hits. At the end of the season, it's best to remove winter tires once temperatures are consistently over 45°.

I have four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive so I don't need winter tires, right?

Acceleration with original equipment tires in winter conditions is relatively easy to achieve with AWD and 4WD. The problem comes when there is a need to steer or stop in a hurry and the tires do not grip. This is why you see so many

SUVs and 4X4s off the road in the early season storms. All-wheel-drive and four-wheel-drive vehicles benefit from winter tires just as much as front-wheel-drive vehicles do.

How will winter tires affect my vehicle's handling and braking?

In general, dry handling and braking will be affected only slightly when using winter tires but the gains in winter weather safety are significant. The biggest change in dry handling and braking a driver could see would be a move from a UHP (ultra-high performance)

summer tire to a studded winter tire. Learn More For more facts on tires and to locate a local dealer, go to www.nokiantires.com.

Don't let cold weather get your tires down. Get winter tires.

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Mark at Peppers Toyota changing tires for a customer

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Winter Is Coming: Is Your Fuel Ready?

(NewsUSA) - Winter is coming -- and that means it's time to store seasonal tools and recreational equipment. Safe, smart storage of motorcycles, RVs, power equipment and seasonal cars goes a long way towards keeping them at their best to ensure peak performance

in the spring. To keep the fuel in gas-powered machines and equipment in peak shape through winter storage, consider these three elements:

Time Is the Enemy

Fuel in gas-powered equipment that

remains in storage during the winter months needs to be stabilized to ensure easy starts and full power in the spring. Untreated fuel begins to oxidize, losing quality and combustibility over time, which leads to engines that are hard to start or run rough.

Fuel

Draining gas from power equipment or cars is one way to prevent gunk and debris from forming, but it isn't always a practical solution. One alternative -- add a fuel

within 30-45 days. However, an enzyme stabilizer, such as Star Tron Enzyme Fuel Treatment, will stabilize gasoline for up to 2 years. Star Tron does much more than simply sta-

Formulation

Some fuel stabilizers contain many of the same anticorrosion and antioxidant additive packs that are already present in pump-grade gas. Adding more of

designed to work in conjunction with pump-grade gas additives to keep fuel fresh for maximum performance in the spring. Fresh fuel and easy engine starts are better for fuel economy, which



Hunter at Peppers Chrysler installing a new rack and pinion

stabilizer. However, you need to choose the right treatment to ensure maximum fuel quality. In general, ethanol-blended gasoline should be used

bilize; the unique enzyme formula also helps improve fuel combustibility to ensure easy starts, full power, improved fuel economy and decreased emissions.

these add-pack compounds can degrade fuel quality causing engines to run rough and smoky when they are started after winter storage. An enzyme stabilizer is

means lower emissions and less environmental impact. And it's not just for winter; an enzyme fuel treatment can maximize fuel quality all year long.

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Winter Driving Poses Special Challenges

(NewsUSA) - Car owners might maintain their vehicles to avoid paying more in fuel costs, but regular maintenance also means safer winter driving. A summer breakdown proves inconvenient, but mechanical problems on icy roads can be deadly.

The experts at the non-profit National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), which formed in 1972 to improve automotive service and repair, offer motorists the following checklist to ensure safe driving this winter:

- Read your owner's manual, and follow the service schedules.

- Get engine driveability problems, like hard starts, rough idling and stalling, corrected at a good repair shop. Cold weather will make existing problems worse.

- Replace dirty filters, including your air, fuel and PCV filters. Change your oil and oil filter as

specified in your manual -; more often if your driving is mostly stop-and-go or consists of frequent short trips.

- Flush and refill your cooling system as recommended. Check the level, condition and concentration of the coolant periodically. Never remove the radiator cap until the engine has thoroughly cooled.

- Leave some jobs to the experts. A certified auto technician can check the tightness and condition of drive belts, clamps, and hoses. ASE-certified technicians pass strict tests to prove their expertise and wear blue-and-white ASE shoulder insignia. For more information, visit www.ase.com.

- Make sure the heater and defroster are in good working condition. A failed heating system will leave passengers cold, while a broken defroster can dangerously reduce visibility.

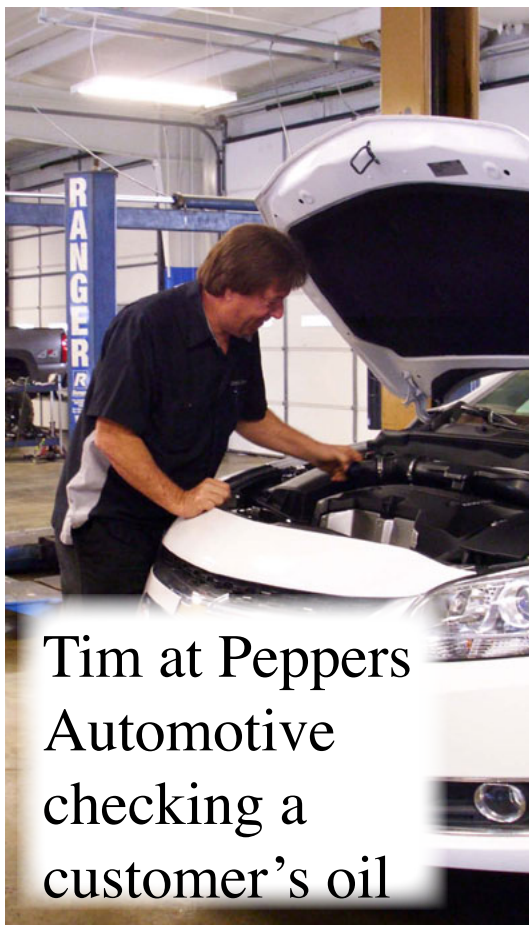
- Hire a technician to check your battery. Only professional equipment can detect weak batteries. Wear eye protection and rubber gloves when cleaning off corrosion.

- Worn tires slip easily, making vehicles more likely to skid. Examine tires for remaining tread life, uneven wearing and cupping, then check the sidewalls for cuts and nicks.

- Check tire pressure once a month. Let the tires "cool down" before checking the pressure. Rotate as recommended. Don't forget your spare, and be sure the jack is in good condition.

- Have your vehicle's exhaust system examined for leaks. The trunk and floorboards should be inspected for small holes. Exhaust fumes can be deadly.

- Keep a blanket, shovel, flares and some high-energy snacks in the vehicle just in case. And don't forget your cell phone.



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Safety Features in Your Car That You May Not Know About

(StatePoint) Today's vehicles come with an abundance of new features and technologies that can aid drivers, make passengers more comfortable and provide real-time information about a vehicle's health. Most importantly, many vehicle technologies today are designed with safety in mind and have the potential to save lives.

The trouble is, too many drivers do not realize these features exist, or know how to use them to their full potential.

A recent University of Iowa study found 40 percent of drivers have been startled or surprised by something their vehicle has done -- a troubling finding given that car crashes are a leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

“Technology can be a game-changer when it comes to safety,” said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “In order to fully recognize the benefits of these new systems, drivers need to be aware of them and also understand their limitations.”

With this need in mind, NSC partnered with the University of Iowa to launch “My Car Does What”

-- a virtual owner's manual that demystifies the latest, most cutting-edge vehicle features.

The campaign's website, www.MyCarDoesWhat.org, highlights technologies such as:

- *Back-up cameras* that provide a view of the blind zone directly behind the car when the vehicle is in reverse
- *Blind spot monitors* that alert drivers when something is in their

blind spot

- *Forward collision warnings* that warn drivers when they are closing in on the vehicle ahead too quickly

- *Automatic emergency braking systems* that apply the brakes if the system detects an imminent collision

- *Anti-lock braking systems* that prevent wheels from locking up, helping to avoid uncontrolled skidding and providing some

steering control in slippery conditions

- *Rear cross traffic alerts* that warn drivers if traffic is approaching from the left or right when the vehicle is in reverse

- *Adaptive cruise control* that maintains the speed set by the driver and a pre-set following distance

- *Lane departure warnings* that alert drivers if they drift into another lane when the turn

signal is not activated.

For a full list of vehicle safety technologies, explanatory videos, graphics and articles, visit MyCarDoesWhat.org.

“The driver will always be a car's best safety feature; no technology today will change that,” Hersman said. “But these features can help mitigate errors before they result in deaths and injuries.”

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When The Rubber Hits The Road—Or Ice—This Winter, Will You Be Ready?

(NAPS)—In winter, it's not just about the precipitation on the road. Tires get cold, too, and when they're cold, all-season tires don't perform to their full potential. In fact, in temperatures as cool as 45 degrees or below, the rubber in all-season tires gradually hardens, leading to decreased road traction and less grip, causing difficulty with braking and turning. Winter tire safety experts at Discount Tire urge drivers to consider their cold weather climate; if it is regularly below 45 degrees, it's time for a set of winter tires to keep you and your family safe on the roads this year.

"Too often, motorists associate winter tires with only snow and ice," said Mark Marrufo of Discount Tire. "At Discount Tire, we take winter tire safety seriously and know it's important for drivers to realize that all-season tires can suffer performance issues on any driving surface when temperatures drop below 45 degrees, snow or no snow."

Winter tires use specially engineered tread rubber with enhanced compound to add the extra grip needed in winter driving conditions that helps keep a car safely in motion



Josh at Mr. Tire changing a tire

without skidding off the road. This added grip provides 25 to 50 percent more traction in snow and ice than regular all-season tires. Tread design in winter tires also uses thousands of extra traction edges for exceptional grip in cold weather driving conditions where ice, snow, slush and water may be present. What drivers may not realize is precipitation can actually pack in

the larger grooves on all-season tires, leading to dangerous skidding and impaired braking.

Five tire and road safety tips for winter this year:

1. Replace your all-season tires with superior cold traction winter tires if you regularly drive in temperatures of 45 degrees or below. Make sure to replace all four tires to avoid an unsafe traction mismatch.

2. Don't forget the wheels when switching to winter tires. Having a set of wheels specifically for your set of winter tires will save money in the

long run. They pay for themselves by eliminating the cost of changeovers at the beginning and end of the winter season, and by saving your expensive wheels from

the wear and tear of ice, slush, snow and salt.

3. Check tire pressure regularly and don't forget to check the spare. Underinflated or over-inflated tires may result in poor handling, uneven tread wear and poor fuel consumption. For every 10 degrees change in temperature, tire air pressure changes 1 psi!

4. Rotate your tires at least every 6,000 miles or earlier if irregular or uneven wear develops.

5. Make sure your tire shop properly torques the lug nuts to the specifications for your vehicle when changing over to winter tires. For those drivers unsure whether or not winter tires are necessary for their vehicle, stop by any Discount Tire location for a free safety inspection. To locate a store near you, schedule tire service appointments or search tires and wheels by size, brand and style—or by vehicle year, make and model—visit www.discounttire.com.

Stay safe on the roads this winter by checking your tires ahead of time.

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(NewsUSA) - Winter driving creates special challenges, which can only be amplified by the long trips many Americans will take over the holidays. To avoid unexpected problems, Mom and Dad should take their vehicle to a shop before they herd the kids into the car and head off to grandma's.

The professionals at the nonprofit National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) offer the following advice for motorists looking to pick the right repair shop.

- Start shopping for a repair facility before you need one. You can make better decisions when you are not rushed or in a panic.

- Ask friends and associates for their recommendations. You may be amazed at how much another person's experience can help.

- Consult your local consumer organization(s) regarding the reputation of the business. Inquire about complaints and the rate of resolution of complaints.

- Look for a neat, well organized facility, with vehicles in the parking lot equal in value to your own and modern equipment in the service bays.

- Look for a courteous staff, with a service writer willing to answer your questions. Be prepared to describe any symptoms, like noises,

unusual leaks or odors, smoke or handling problems, or carry a written list to give to the service consultant.

- Ask if the repair facility specializes in certain types of repair work.

- Look for signs of business professionalism in the customer service area such as civic, community, or customer service awards.

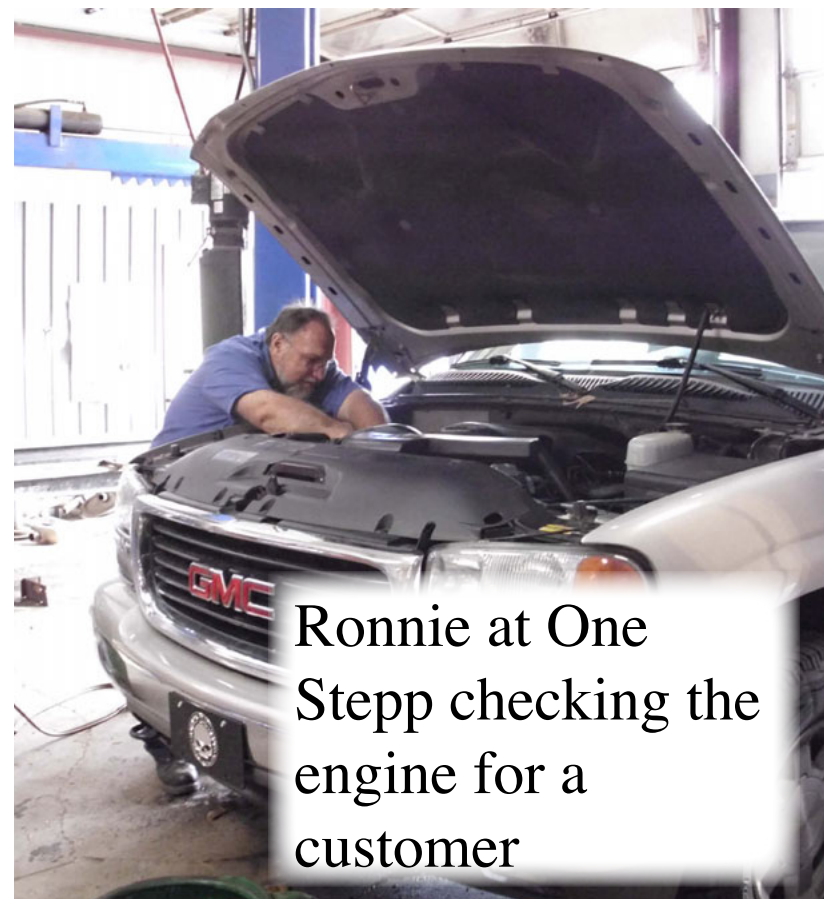
- Look for qualified technicians as evidenced by trade-school diplomas, certificates of advanced course work or on-going training, and individual technician certification by ASE.

- Look for policies regarding labor rates, diagnostic fees, guarantees and acceptable

methods of payment.

- Keep all of your paperwork. Good records will help clear up problems that may occur later on in the vehicle's life.

For more information, including seasonal car care tips, visit www.ase.com. ASE was founded in 1972 to improve the quality of automotive service and repair through the voluntary testing and certification of automotive technicians. ASE-certified technicians wear blue and white ASE shoulder insignia and carry credentials listing their exact areas of certification. Their employers often display the blue and white ASE sign.



Ronnie at One Stepp checking the engine for a customer



Chris at Auto Trim Design installing window tinting



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