

Tips to prepare your auto for winter travel



(ARA) - The cold snap has arrived and the stormy winter days and dark evenings are here. It is time to prepare your car for the winter months to minimize the risk of a breakdown. Such breakdowns could be avoided by carrying out regular checks, so motorists are advised to follow these steps to minimize the risk.

"There's nothing worse than breaking down on a cold winter night, stranded on the side of the road," says Jim Fults, auto insurance leader at Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. "A few basic and regular checks can dramatically reduce the risk of getting stuck on the road." "We urge motorists to set aside some time to carry out a series of simple checks," says Fults. "Some may seem like common sense, but you'll be surprised at how many drivers forget after the summer. For example, it is crucial to ensure all your lights are clean and working properly. Always replace any broken bulbs immediately. If you don't, you will not only find it difficult to see the road clearly, you run the risk of not being seen by other drivers."

Make sure you minimize the risk of breakdown this winter by following some tips from Fireman's Fund:

Fireman's Fund winter auto safety tips:

- * Get your car checked: A professional check is worth it, for added peace of mind.
- * Check your tires: Rain, snow and ice can make roads lethal. Check your tire tread and make sure the air pressure is okay.
- * Light the way: Keep lights clean and make sure they are working.
- * Get charged up: A dead battery is the main cause of breakdowns, so get it checked and replaced if necessary.
- * Cooling system: Ensure this is checked and that the anti-freeze content meets the manufacturer requirements.
- * Wipers: Check windscreen wipers and replace if they fail to clear the screen correctly.
- * Fuel: Ensure you have more than enough for your journey.

Be prepared and take the following items with you:

- * A fully charged cell phone
- * Shovel in case of snow
- * De-icer and a scraper for windows
- * Blanket and warm clothing in case the worst happens
- * Sturdy shoes or rubber boots
- * Some snacks, such as energy bars
- * Extra fuel

In addition, it is a good idea to put together an emergency winter survival kit so that you are prepared should you breakdown. Remember to include a flashlight, blanket, ice scraper and a first aid kit.