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Follow this safety checklist for driving in ice and snow

Car trouble on winter roads can be as dangerous as it is inconvenient.

Breakdowns have a habit of occurring unexpectedly, but with a little planning you can outsmart the odds.

The wisdom of assembling an emergency kit for various winter problems is key to peace-of-mind driving.

Here is Prestone's checklist of safety tips and handy tools:

Safety Check List

- Start with a well-maintained vehicle and one that has been fully prepared and equipped for winter conditions.

- Keep the gas tank as full as possible and examine your heater to be sure it's in good working order.

- Carry a cellphone and keep emergency phone numbers in the glove compartment.

- Pack non-perishable food supplies and beverages in case you are detained much longer than expected.

- Check all fluid levels, in particular the antifreeze. And always carry a spare container of windshield washer fluid.

Emergency Kit

- Pack flares and reflectors to alert other drivers. Include a white cloth to tie to your antenna in the event of a breakdown. It is a well accepted signal of distress.

- A set of jumper cables and

clamps are essential to your kit. Even better, carry your own portable power source so there's no need for another automobile. Jump It! is a handy, self-powered device that, once charged, can start up to 30 cars on one charge - and according to Prestone, there is also a heavy duty Jump It! model for diesels and larger engines.

- Locate your spare tire and your jack. Are they in good working order and do you know what to do in the event of an emergency? To prevent flat tire headaches, include a quick-fix in your kit: a light-weight, aerosol device called Tire Jack seals the holes and re-inflates a punctured tire until you get it to the nearest garage. Tire Jack can be a lifesaver considering that every year in Canada as many as 300,000 roadside assistance calls are related to tire problems.

- Melt ice under your tires with a product called Lava Rocks. It is effective up to -20C and is considered far more effective than salt.

- Windshield Heat is another winter kit product, formulated by Prestone. In extreme cold it turns into a potent de-icing agent that removes frost, prevents ice build-up on the windshield, and delivers streak-free visibility. More information is available on-line at www.prestone.com or toll-free (800) 333-1106

—News Canada

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