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Prepare Young Drivers For Safe Winter Travel

By News Canada

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by: News Canada

(NC)—Many young drivers will venture onto the roads this winter season, some for the first time. In fact, there are almost 3 million drivers in Canada between the ages of 16 and 24.2 That's why it's important for parents to prepare teenagers and young drivers for the difficult winter months, by making sure their vehicles are properly maintained and they've been given helpful instructions and well-stocked emergency kits.

First and foremost, have their vehicles checked thoroughly. Belts, hoses, water pumps, batteries and spark plugs need to be properly maintained. Winter tends to magnify any problems a vehicle might have. One simple routine that helps maintain fuel efficiency and engine performance is spark plug maintenance. "Too many people underestimate the power and importance of a spark plug, but it's exposed to more severe stress than any other part of the engine," says Peg Campbellton, Brand Manager for Autolite.

A spark plug must deliver a high voltage spark within split second timing, thousands of times a minute and under extremely varying, always hostile, operating conditions. Campbellton suggests having the vehicle's spark plugs changed every 48,000 kilometers, or in accordance with the owner's manual. Using premium, platinum-tipped plugs, such as Autolite® Double Platinum spark plugs, is also a good idea.

Once a thorough under-the-hood inspection is complete, make sure your new driver checks their tire tread and windshield wipers as well as fluid levels like washer solvent and antifreeze/ coolant. Many motorists are under the impression that antifreeze/coolant is only needed in the warmer season to avoid overheating, but the proper mixture is necessary to avoid engine freeze-ups in frigid temperatures. A recommended concentration of 50% Prestone solution protects your vehicle down to -36.8C. Prestone antifreeze can be adjusted to give protection down to -64.4C if it is required.

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Windshield wipers and washer fluid are also vital. It's a good idea to switch to a winter wiper blade. They are more durable and designed to handle the snow and ice better than a regular blade. If wipers aren't working properly or if there's a lack of fluid in the reservoir, the combination of salt, ice and sleet may reduce the driver's ability to see other vehicles or objects in the road. Use a concentrated washer fluid additive designed specifically for cold weather driving, such as Prestone, Windshield Heat' De-Icer Concentrate Additive. Unlike many "blue" washer fluids that aren't as effective in extreme cold, this concentrated deicer melts frost and light ice and boosts the freeze protection of your regular washer fluid. It also guards against re-freeze on windshields. "For those who park outside, a concentrated windshield washer additive with a deicer product makes a lot of sense for those early morning drives to school in the late fall and into the winter months," states Megan Currie, Prestone Brand Manager.

Remind new drivers to turn on their headlights any time they use their windshield wipers. It will help improve visibility and allow them to be seen better by other drivers. Emphasize the importance of clearing off the entire car, not just a portion. If the entire vehicle hasn't been cleared properly, it creates hazardous situations for your child when they are driving, and for other motorists on the road. It is also

a good safety precaution to keep more than a half tank of gas in the vehicle during the cold weather season. It'll be the only source of heat if somebody is stranded.

Although these preventative maintenance tips do help, they by no means serve as a complete deterrent to potential problems. Prepare for a roadside emergency with a special winter kit that includes: A cell phone - for calling you in case of emergency A portable jump starter - in case of a dead battery, they won't be stranded alone in the cold A flashlight and extra batteries Emergency flares - so other motorists can see their vehicle Sand bags - highly recommended for vehicles with rear-wheel drive A tire inflator and sealer Warm clothes and blankets Extra de-icer washer fluid and a spray de-icer Ice scraper with a snow brush Tire traction product Shovel

Even though young people today are always on the go, emphasize the significance of these safety tips. It may change what could be a disastrous situation into a simple inconvenience.

2 Source: Statistics Canada, Transportation Division 2000

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Young Drivers Need Winter Practice

By News Canada

(NC)—One of the more nerve-wrecking experiences of parenthood occurs when your teenager first earns his or her license to drive. While many parts of Canada have ensured that new drivers be accompanied with a more experienced driver in the vehicle, it's important that parents take some time to share safety tips with their teenagers.

Learning to drive is challenging enough. When you throw snow, ice and slush into the driving mix, it can catch new drivers off guard. Therefore, passing along winter driving wisdom to your teens is especially crucial.

"Since you probably own the car your teenager is driving, you should ensure that it is prepared for winter-weather," says Tony Mougios, Michelin Brand Manager in Canada. "Part of that preparation involves installing four winter tires on the vehicle. Winter tires will enhance the safety and performance of your vehicle and allow whoever is driving to maintain greater control in winter conditions."

For those parents whose teens are about to take to the road for the first time this winter, Michelin offers these tips for teaching young drivers to prepare for and cope with winter's challenges.

Winter weather puts your vehicle's mechanical systems and performance to the ultimate test, and demands that your vehicle is in excellent condition. Make sure that your tires and all mechanical systems, including your brakes, are in top working order.

Take your new driver to a vacant, snow or ice covered parking lot where you can safely practice slow-speed manoeuvres.

A novice driver's first on-the-road experience with winter-weather driving should not be during a major blizzard. Ensure he/she waits until conditions are less severe.

If possible, have your teenager practice driving on slippery roads in daylight only. Exposure to slippery roads at night should be limited until beginners have gained more experience driving in various types of winter weather. · Maintain a safe driving distance from the vehicle in front of you.

Make sure the speed limit is observed and respected.

Transform the trunk of your vehicle into a winter survival kit by filling it with essential emergency equipment including a flashlight, blankets, jumper cables, sand and a small shovel or ice scraper.

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