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Rand McNally Lists Top 10 Tips for Safe Holiday Travels Weather and Congestion Can Make Getting There A Challenge

Skokie, Ill., December 9, 2010 – Just in time for the holiday travel season, Rand McNally’s editors have pulled together the Top 10 Tips for Safe Winter Road Travel. The arrival of cold and blustery weather in many parts of the country combined with increased traffic on the roads, can make getting “over the river and through the woods” more stressful than at other times of the year.

“More than 60% of U.S. leisure travelers take road trips, “ said Dave Muscatel, CEO of Rand McNally. “Advanced planning and patience are the keys to traveling our roads safely, especially during inclement weather.”

“With road travel, drivers and passengers play a large role in how safely they travel. These simple, must-read tips from our editors can help ensure that folks are safer this season,” continued Jeff DeKorte, SVP of Travel & Digital Media for Rand McNally.

Top 10 Tips for Safe Winter Road Travel

1. Know the differences among various winter weather advisories. The National Weather Service issues several cautions; understand what they mean before you hit the road:
 - a. **Winter weather advisories** are for conditions that may be hazardous, but should not become life threatening when using caution.
 - b. **Winter storm watches** mean that severe winter conditions may affect your area and are issued 12-36 hours in advance of major storms.
 - c. **Winter storm warnings** mean a storm bringing four or more inches of snow/sleet is expected in the next 12 hours, or six or more inches in 24 hours.
 - d. **Blizzard warnings** mean snow and strong winds will produce blinding snow, deep drifts, and a life-threatening wind chill.
2. Let someone know your timetable and travel route. This is especially important if you'll be driving in areas with little traffic, rural locations, or large park areas.

3. Prevention is the best medicine: Driving slowly and maintaining plenty of room between you and the next car is the easiest way to avoid accidents. We all want to get to Christmas dinner faster but that extra 30 minutes could save your life. In bad weather, allow for three-to-12 times more stopping distance depending on the size of your vehicle.
4. Stock your car with a shovel, broom, ice scraper, jumper cables, blankets, flashlight, warning devices (flares), sand or kitty litter, and high-calorie non-perishable food.
5. Keep spare, charged batteries for cell phones in your car. Duracell and others make instant chargers for popular phones such as the iPhone®. If your car battery dies, you will be glad you spent the extra \$15 to reach help. If you regularly travel to very remote areas where cell towers are few and far between, consider investing in a satellite telephone or an in-car service like On-Star.
6. Keep your gas tank full to prevent the fuel line from freezing. Also, make sure the windshield wiper fluid reservoir is full.
7. Check to make sure your lights and windshield wipers are functioning properly. In most states it is illegal to drive if either is malfunctioning; and in certain weather situations it is also extremely unsafe.
8. Know your health insurance plan's emergency care policies. What kind of doctors can you visit? If you have in-network benefits what happens if you need medical care beyond your home city or state? Are you charged differently for treatment at a hospital emergency room (without being admitted) or an emergency walk-in clinic?
9. If you get stuck in the snow, stay in your car – it's your best shelter. Don't leave unless help is within 100 yards.
10. Nearly 60% of accidents are the result of improper driving. Whether you've had a bit too much pie or a bit too much pilsner, don't drive until you are fully awake and not impaired by anything. Most adults know well enough not to drink and drive, but few realize accidents are just as easily caused by being drowsy or impaired by legal drugs like cold medicines. When in doubt, pull to the side of the road or check into a motel for a quick nap.

And a bonus point: carry a first aid kit in the car with you. This is especially important if you have children or older individuals riding with you.

For more information and travel tips, please visit www.RandMcNally.com.

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