

SUMMER CAR CARE

Car Care stories & photos
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Creative Connection

Precautions help road-trippers stay on course when traveling

When the outdoors beckons, road trips can be the perfect way to see the countryside, escape the routine of daily life and enjoy short vacations.

When taking to the open road, it is important to focus on safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that planning and prevention can spare road-trippers from the consequences of breakdowns, traffic accidents or other road emergencies.

- Stock emergency preparedness items. Prior to a trip, drivers should make sure their vehicles are equipped with necessary safety items. Liberty Mutual Insurance New Beginnings Report warns that nearly half of Americans do not check that proper emergency items are stored in their vehicles prior to getting on the road. Before embarking on a road trip, make sure vehicles have a first aid kit, flashlight, water bottles, phone chargers, tire-repair tools, flares, jumper cables, towels and even an old backpack for storage.

- Schedule a service call. Regular maintenance can keep vehicles from breaking down. Drivers should take their cars in for tune-ups before long road trips. Such tune-ups should include an oil change, battery check, tire rotation and any other necessary servicing.

- Plan your route. Map out the route before heading out. Be aware of po-



Keep summer road trips safe for all involved by doing simple steps before and after you hit the road.

tential road closures, obstacles or construction. Thanks to real-time GPS updates through mobile phones and other devices, some drivers like to rely on tech to get them through. However,

service may be spotty in rural areas. Mapping a trip out in advance can save drivers from getting lost during mobile service interruptions.

- Join a roadside repair service. Break-

downs happen even if trips are carefully planned. Automotive clubs can help drivers when breakdowns occur. Some car manufacturers also include roadside assistance in warranty packages, so

inquire about your coverage.

- Refresh defensive driving skills. A safe-driving course can remind drivers of the rules of the road. In some cases, courses also may qualify drivers for discounts on their auto insurance policies. One such class is the AARP Driver Safety course.

- Avoid distractions. Keep children and other passengers occupied so they are not a distraction to the driver. Set out with favorite music, books, video games or even a pad and paper for doodling. Pack snacks to keep everyone feeling full in between roadside pit stops. Drivers also can load their cars up with tissues, water and music to limit distractions.

- Plan fun breaks along the way. Breaks give drivers a reason to rest and passengers an opportunity to get out and stretch their legs. The Roadside America smartphone app lists must-see stops along any route, and drivers can plan their own stops as well.

- Stay over if necessary. According to the NHTSA, driving while drowsy is a contributing factor in 100,000 accidents every year. Drive only when well-rested. Share driving duties or plan a night at a motel so everyone is well-rested.

Road trips are all about fun, but drivers must emphasize safety before and during such excursions.

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- Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA)
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- Want more information? Stop by Les Schwab Tire Center, 4325 Highway 101 in Florence or call 541-997-7178.

Simple ways to extend the life of your vehicle

Automobiles are significant investments. According to Kelley Blue Book, the average transaction price for light vehicles was \$34,968 in January 2017, marking a 3 percent increase from just a year earlier.

The decision to spend thousands of dollars on a new vehicle is not one consumers should take lightly. Once drivers purchase their new vehicles, they can protect their investments and get greater returns on those investments by prioritizing maintenance and taking simple yet effective steps to extend the lives of their cars and trucks.

1. Drive defensively

Aggressive driving is dangerous and can have adverse effects on a vehicle. When driving, always obey posted speed limits and avoid accelerating and decelerating quickly. Such a style of driving can strain vehicle engines and drive trains while negatively affecting fuel efficiency and wearing down brakes.

2. Maintain a clean vehicle

Car washes do more than just clean a vehicle. Routine washing and waxing can remove dirt that, if left on a vehicle, can gradually scratch paint and contribute to chips and rust. Over time, rust can affect vehicle performance and may even compromise the safety of drivers and their passengers if bad enough frame rust affects structural integrity. Routine washing also can remove road salt from vehicles.

3. Check tire pressure

Many of today's new vehicles alert drivers when tire pressure is low. Drivers should not ignore such warnings, as low tire pressure can affect engine performance by forcing it to work harder than necessary. Engines that are forced to work harder than they need to likely won't last as long as those that run efficiently. Low tire pressure also negatively affects fuel efficiency, potentially costing drivers substantial amounts of money over time. Drivers of older vehicles without tire pressure alerts

should routinely check tire pressure and keep tires adequately inflated. Vehicles that are slow to accelerate from resting positions may not have enough air in their tires.

4. Maintain a schedule

Drivers may have heard that today's vehicles were built to go longer periods of time between oil changes and tune-ups than the vehicles of yesteryear. But drivers should still adhere to manufacturer-recommended maintenance guidelines. Upon buying new vehicles, drivers should read their owners' manuals to determine recommended maintenance intervals, and stick to those intervals for as long as they have their vehicles.

Cognizant of the sizable investments they're making when buying new vehicles, many drivers want to get as many miles out of their vehicles as possible. Simple maintenance and safe driving habits can go a long way toward keeping vehicles on the road for years to come.




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Essentials for roadside emergency kits

The following are some must-have items drivers should include in their roadside emergency kits.


• Roadside flares	basic tool kit	oil, brake fluid, anti-freeze, water
• First-aid kit	• Tire-pressure gauge	• Cell phone charger
• Jumper cables	• Spare tire	• Contact information
• Warm blankets	• Non-perishable snacks and drinking water	• Check in person who knows your route
• Flashlight	• Extra fluids — motor	
• Screwdrivers and a		





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