



Auto Guide

FREE
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Supplement to the Tribune



Tips to identify when someone is too impaired to drive



Roughly 34 people in the United States die in crashes related to drunk driving every day. That equates to one person every 42 minutes, says the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. MAAD Canada indicates there are about nine

charges per hour for alcohol or drug-impaired driving in Canada, with an average of 215 charges and short-term suspensions daily.

Although progress has been made regarding the prevention of impaired driving, drivers under the influence

can include signs of poor balance, stumbling or bumping into objects. Speech may be slurred, slow or at a volume different from normal. The person may complain of blurry or double vision. Cognitive symptoms also can indicate a person is too impaired to drive. Anyone making risky decisions or having trouble concentrating, focusing or remembering things likely is too impaired to drive.

Laws are in place to keep drivers, passengers and pedestrians safe from impaired drivers. But without a breathalyzer test, how can people know if a person is too impaired to drive? Or what if the substance causing the impairment is not alcohol? Learning more about impairment can prevent injuries and deaths.

• **Personal observation**
Individuals may determine if a person is too impaired to drive based on various factors. Physical symptoms

can include signs of poor balance, stumbling or bumping into objects. Speech may be slurred, slow or at a volume different from normal. The person may complain of blurry or double vision. Cognitive symptoms also can indicate a person is too impaired to drive. Anyone making risky decisions or having trouble concentrating, focusing or remembering things likely is too impaired to drive.

• **Err on the side of caution**
It is always better to be overly cautious and avoid driving if someone has consumed alcohol or used a drug that can affect the ability to operate a motor vehicle. Medications affect everyone differently and are metabolized in different ways depending on the person, which is why many medical procedures that involve sedation require the patient to get a ride home.

When in doubt, it's best for a person to grab a rideshare or taxi or have a trusted friend or family member drive them where they need to go.

• **What is BAC?**
The amount of alcohol in a person's body is measured by the weight of the alcohol in a certain volume of blood. This measurement is called the blood alcohol concentration, or BAC. Alcohol can be measured within 30 to 70 minutes after a person has had a drink, notes the NHTSA. Absorption will be slowed by food in the stomach and weight. In the United States (apart from Utah, which has a lower limit), the standard legal BAC limit for drivers is 0.08 percent.

• **Field sobriety tests**
A range of drugs, both licit and illicit, can impair one's ability to drive. The relationship between blood levels of drugs and driving impair-

ment hasn't been established for drugs other than alcohol, says the NHTSA. However, law enforcement may use Field Sobriety Tests (FSTs) to assess a driver's physical and cognitive abilities. Such tests include the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus test, which requires the subject to follow a moving object with their eyes while an officer looks for involuntary jerking; the Walk and Turn test, in which the subject walks nine heel-to-toe steps, turns, and walks back the same way while counting; and the One-Leg Stand test. These tests help officers identify if a person is impaired.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol or another substance risks one's life and the lives of others. It's important to recognize when a person might be unfit to drive and take action to prevent injuries and death.

Signs an aging driver might not be safe behind the wheel

Driving is often associated with independence. The freedom that comes with being a licensed driver is often noted when newly minted motorists get a driver's license. But the sense of independence that comes with being a licensed driver affects all motorists, including seniors.

Many seniors have spent half a century if not longer behind the wheel. That history undoubtedly makes it difficult for aging drivers to relinquish their keys should factors beyond their control begin to jeopardize their ability to drive safely and thus pose a threat to themselves and others. In such instances, family members may need to step in and make difficult decisions for aging relatives in relation to their driving. Before that decision is made, families can keep an eye out for various signs that a loved one might no longer be safe behind the wheel.

• **Frequent accidents or near misses:** The National Institute on Aging notes that aging drivers who are in multiple vehicle crashes or near misses may no longer be safe to drive. Even drivers who are not at fault in a given accident may otherwise have been able to avoid being involved if not for diminished abilities behind the wheel. The NIA notes that slower reaction time and reflexes are two driving abilities that can diminish over time, and that can increase the chances aging drivers are in an accident.

• **Vehicle damage:** Another sign an aging driver may be experiencing diminishing driving abilities is the presence of new dents or scrapes on a car. The NIA notes that stiff joints and muscles and difficulty seeing are some common age-related health conditions that can affect a driver's ability to safely operate a motor ve-

hicle. When such problems begin to appear, drivers may experience difficulty navigating areas like parking lots and narrow streets that do not have ample shoulder space. The results can be vehicle damage like dents or scrapes.

• **Increase in traffic tickets:** The NIA suggests two or more traffic tickets or warnings within the last two years is a sign drivers' skills are diminishing.

• **Anxiety about nighttime driving conditions and other motorists:** Aging drivers who express anxiety about driving at night may no longer be safe to drive, especially after the sun goes down. Some aging drivers simply stop driving at night, which suggests they might be capable of driving safely during the day. In addition, drivers who have anxiety or make frequent complaints about other drivers' actions, including their speed and decision-



making in regard to actions like lane changes, may be experiencing diminished abilities behind the wheel.

There's no universal age when older drivers should stop driving. But families can keep an eye open for various

signs suggesting aging drivers are no longer safe behind the wheel.

Speak with your physicians about your medications. A recent study from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found that the average adult age 65 and older now uses roughly four medications. Medications produce side effects that can affect every area of a user's life, including their ability to drive. Those effects might be heightened when taking more than one medication, and interactions also can lead to side effects that might not manifest if individuals were taking just one prescription. Aging drivers can maintain an honest and ongoing dialogue with their physicians to ensure they're aware of the effects their medications might be having on their ability to drive safely. Report any new side effects the moment they appear.

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Common car noises and what they might be indicating



Although there are many drivers who understand what goes on under the hood of a vehicle and the inner workings of car mechanics, there are plenty of others who might not know a spark plug from a dipstick. For the latter group, random noises when driving can be a cause for immediate alarm.

Certain noises can be innocuous and easily fixed, while others may be indicative of something more complex. Pinpointing where a noise is coming from can help vehicle owners identify the problem. Here's a list of some common sounds and what the causes might be, courtesy of Firestone, Geico and Nationwide.

- High-pitched squealing

Screeching or squealing coming from the tires when stepping on the brakes likely means that brake pads are wearing down and the indicator is rubbing against the rotor. Although this is not an emergency situation, it does mean that brakes will need to be replaced very soon.

- Rattling in the wheel

If you hear rattling inside of a wheel at low speeds which stops as you drive faster, it could mean there is a loose lug nut inside of the hub cap. That wheel wasn't tightened properly the last time it was removed and replaced. Bring the car to a mechanic as soon

as possible.

- Clicking

If you try to start the car and only hear a clicking sound instead of the car turning over, a dead battery is likely the cause. Such a noise also may indicate corroded battery terminals that are preventing the current from flowing. Terminals need to be cleaned. The battery should be checked and jumped, if necessary. If a battery is not holding a charge, a new one is needed.

- Squeaky or scraping windshield wipers

Squeaking and scraping means the windshield wipers are wearing down or the windshield is dirty. Clean the windshield and inspect the wiper blades to make sure they are in working order. A bad wiper and dirty windshield can reduce visibility and make driving dangerous.

- Clunking sounds

Clunking sounds may indicate a few different issues. A clunking sound might indicate worn out shock absorbers, which absorb vibrations from the wheels. Damaged struts also can cause clunking. Worn out leaf spring shackles that help in off-roading conditions also can cause clunking when they bend or break. Bring your vehicle to a mechanic soon,

- Humming, whining or

whirring

These strange noises might have different origins. Check if the differential needs to be lubricated. A wheel bearing also could be worn out and produce a noise. In more severe cases, the transmission could be failing. The best course of action is to get a professional opinion from a mechanic.

- Flapping noise

A broken belt typically is the culprit when a vehicle makes a flapping or slapping noise. Something also may be interfering with the fan. Driving with a broken belt may cause severe engine damage, so it's important to address the issue.

- Squealing under the hood

Squealing can indicate worn or loose accessory belts. In newer cars it might be the serpentine belt. Belts are relatively inexpensive and easy fixes for your mechanic.

These are some of the sounds that vehicles can make when something is awry. Figuring out the issue can prevent further damage.

Understanding auto insurance for young adults

(Family Features) Adulthood is an exciting time, but it also means new responsibilities.

"Young adults are stepping into a world filled with opportunities and uncertainties," said Kevin Quinn, VP, Auto Claims at Mercury Insurance. "Understanding your insurance needs is a crucial step in protecting your future."

If you've been on your parents' auto insurance and now need your own, consider these simple steps from Mercury Insurance to help you get the coverage you need.

1. Review Your Current Coverage

As a starting point, talk to your parents and their insurance agent to understand what coverage you currently have.

"Knowing what coverage you've had under your parents' policy helps you understand what protections you might need going forward," Quinn said.

2. Decide on Your Coverage

Understanding the different types of coverage available ensures you choose the right protection for your vehicle and situation. Different types of coverage include:

- Liability: Covers damage you cause to others.
- Collision: Covers damage to your car from accidents.
- Comprehensive: Covers non-accident damage (like theft or weather).

3. Check State Requirements

Every state has different auto insurance laws. Look up the minimum coverage requirements for your state or ask an agent to explain them.



Photos courtesy of Shutterstock

4. Get Quotes

Shopping around is essential. Contact multiple insurance companies to get quotes. Different companies offer various rates and discounts, so take the time to compare prices and coverage options to find the best deal. For example, you can obtain a quote from Mercury Insurance online.

Many insurers also offer discounts for safe driving, good grades or combining policies. Be sure to ask about lower rates and potential savings for:

- Good driving record
- Completing driver education courses
- Bundling with other insurance policies

5. Review and Choose

Look over the quotes and coverage options. Select a policy that provides adequate coverage without stretching your budget too thin.

6. Set Up Your Policy

Once you've chosen a policy, work with the insurance company to set it up. For example, Mercury Insurance has a team of agents ready to help make this process as seamless and easy as possible. Make sure you understand the terms and conditions to avoid surprises later on and contact an agent if you have any questions.

For more information, visit mercuryinsurance.com or contact your local agent.

Source: Mercury Insurance

These vehicles will help keep car insurance costs down

(BPT) - No matter which vehicle segment you're shopping in, not all vehicles are created equal in the eyes of insurance carriers. Some cost more to insure, while others cost less. Due to a variety of economic factors, namely inflation, the cost of car insurance has risen significantly over the last five years, putting record numbers of U.S. consumers into the market shopping for more affordable policies, according to J.D. Power.

Enter Mercury Insurance's series of most affordable vehicles to insure, which includes the top 10 most affordable vehicles to insure across popular vehicle segments including sedans, trucks and SUVs, and electric vehicles (EVs). Mercury's research and development team has compiled the lists by examining vehicles currently available at car dealerships. "It's imperative that consumers research average



car insurance costs for the vehicles they are considering, as this may help narrow the list. Mercury's most-affordable-vehicles-to-insure lists are a great place to start," said Chong Gao, Director of Product Management R&D for Mercury Insurance.

"Luxury vehicles and EVs, for example, are generally not ideal choices for those looking to maximize insurance savings. However, there are some deals to be had, as our lists do include a few upscale vehicles." Here are the top 10 most

affordable vehicles to insure from popular vehicle segments, beginning with the most affordable make and model:

Sedans

- Volkswagen Golf R
- Acura Integra
- Mazda 3

- Kia K4
- Nissan Versa
- Volvo S90
- H* MINI Cooper
- Kia K5
- Nissan Kicks*
- While these vehicles are considered small crossovers, they are included in the sedan category for this list.

Trucks

- Chevrolet Colorado LT
- Chevrolet Silverado C3500
- Ford Maverick
- Ford Ranger
- Hyundai Santa Cruz SE
- Toyota Tundra CrewMax
- Ford F150
- Toyota Tacoma
- Ford F350 Super Duty
- Dodge 1500/RAM Truck 1500
- GMC Canyon

SUVs

- Hyundai Sante Fe
- Honda Pilot
- Chevrolet Blazer
- Kia Sportage
- Honda Passport
- Ford Escape
- Kia Soul

- Honda HR-V
- Honda CR-V
- Kia Sorento

EVs

- Chevrolet Blazer EV
- Chevrolet Equinox EV
- Nissan Leaf
- Kia Niro EV
- Ford F-150 Lightning
- Hyundai Kona EV
- MINI Cooper SE
- Hyundai IONIQ EV (all models)
- Fiat 500e
- Subaru Solterra
- Toyota BZ4X

"In today's high-cost environment, being a savvy shopper means looking at the total cost of ownership," said Gao. "Choosing a vehicle that's more affordable to insure could save you hundreds of dollars annually, and that's exactly what our most-affordable-to-insure series is designed to help consumers do."

To learn more about saving on car insurance costs, visit Mercury's blog.

Signs you might be an aggressive driver

Speeding down the roadway snaking your way in and out of traffic may seem like the only way to get to a destination on time. But such driving can put you and others around you at risk for accidents and injury.

The Insurance Information Institute indicates that aggressive driving is a major

factor in traffic crashes and plays a role in a large number of fatal highway collisions each year in the United States. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration characterizes aggressive driving as instances when "an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger

other persons or property." This may seem like a harsh definition of a rare situation, but aggressive driving is very common.

Drivers may not think they are being aggressive, arguing that they're "simply keeping up with traffic." But the following habits are indicators of aggressive driving.

• Try to beat red lights: This occurs if you're in a hurry all the time and don't want to wait at traffic signals.

• Failing to yield the right of way to others: This is true of drivers who do not yield to pedestrians or other motorists when merging.

- Not letting someone into a lane while changing lanes or merging onto the highway.
- Excessive speeding.
- Weaving in and out of lanes to improve efficiency and get places faster.
- Intimidating others by tailgating and flashing your high beams in the hopes they



- will move faster.
- Overusing the horn.
- Communicating angrily with other drivers by gesticulating or yelling out of the window.
- Becoming frustrated when people drive slowly, especially if there is a lot of traffic.
- Rolling through stop signs

at most intersections.

- Failing to signal when making a turn or changing lanes.

Aggressive driving is a significant safety threat. Curtailing aggressive behaviors can help drivers make the roads safer for everyone.



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Four car-buying tips for you to consider

Drivers spend a lot of time in their vehicles, and that's perhaps one reason why new car buyers are willing to spend so much on a new automobile. According to a recent report from Kelley Blue Book, the average transaction price of a new vehicle in June 2025 was just under \$49,000.

Drivers who have not purchased a new car in a while may be overcome by sticker shock when they start shopping for a new car, but plenty of reliable vehicles can still be had for less than \$49,000. Motorists in the market for new vehicles can consider these four tips as they begin their search for a new ride.

1. Consider buying in fall. Fall can be a buyer-friendly time to purchase a new vehicle because many deal-

erships may be seeking to unload outgoing model years to make room for the coming year's models. In such instances, dealerships may sell outgoing model year vehicles for thousands of dollars less than the incoming year's models. Inventory of outgoing model years may be limited, which can reduce the options drivers have in regard to various amenities, such as vehicle color and accessories. But if such details aren't high on buyers' priority lists, then buying in fall can be advantageous.

2. Make a sizable down payment, if possible. Interest rates remain high, so the less drivers will need to borrow when buying a new car, the more money they'll save in interest charges over the life of the loan. The consumer

advocates at Consumer Reports recommend new car buyers put at least 15 percent down and ideally between 20 and 25 percent at the time of purchase. The higher the initial down payment, the more manageable the ensuing monthly payments become.

3. Get your credit ducks in a row. Of course, the size of the down payment won't be the only number that determines the amount of a monthly payment. Drivers' credit ratings affect their interest rates, so it's best to maintain a good reputation or rebuild a poor one in the months leading up to a new car purchase. Pay off existing consumer debt entirely, if possible. If that's beyond reason, then make sure to make all monthly payments on time and pay more than just the minimum



required each month.

4. Shop for incentives. Consumer Reports notes that dealerships and manufacturers offer a wide range of incentives that can help to reduce the cost of a new

vehicle. Cash-back offers and zero percent financing are two notable incentives buyers can shop for. After researching which vehicles to buy, shop around for incentives packages to help narrow

down your options.

Drivers in the market for a new vehicle can employ various strategies to land a reliable and affordable car or truck.

Tips for driving at night

Driving requires drivers to use their senses so they, their passengers and their fellow motorists can safely traverse the roadways. When any of those senses are compromised, the risk for accident increases.

Sight is vital to safe driving. Individuals who have vision problems must correct these issues by wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses to stay safe behind the wheel. But what if the condition affecting vision is nighttime?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that accidents happen in greater frequency at night, when the passenger vehicle occupant fatality rate is around three times higher than the daytime rate. That's despite the fact that there are far fewer cars on the road



at night than during the daytime.

Reduced visibility and drowsiness behind the wheel after the sun goes down may cause many people to avoid driving at night. But driving

at night isn't always avoidable, especially during the months when the sun sets early. When forced to drive at night, drivers can follow these tips to make it safer and easier.

- Get enough rest. Skip the road trip if you are feeling

tired or if you have taken medication that can cause drowsiness.

- Improve headlight visibility. Make sure headlights are in good working order and that the plastic covering on the headlights is not cloudy, which can adversely

affect light output. The angle of the lamp also is a factor. Some headlights may need a periodic angle adjustment.

- Stick to multi-lane roadways. Today's vehicles are typically equipped with LED lights rather than halogen or incandescent bulbs. A study in the SAE International Journal of Passenger Cars found that these LED lamps were "generally perceived to be brighter than a standard incandescent lamp." Although these lamps may help drivers see in front of them while driving, oncoming drivers often claim they are blinded. Oncoming lights can be particularly intense on a two-lane road. On a multi-lane road, you can put yourself at a distance from oncoming cars if you stick to an outer lane.

- Clean your windshield. A dirty windshield can cause

additional glare and also make it challenging to see the road.

- Slow down and watch the shoulder. It can be difficult to see pedestrians and animals at night. Deer often are struck at dusk or overnight, particularly between the months of October and January.

- Get an eye exam. Age-related vision changes can compromise vision and perception of glare. Speak with an eye professional about which coatings can be applied to glasses to help with glare and if any tweaks to prescriptions need to be made.

Nighttime driving requires a few different strategies to make it safer and more comfortable to drive after the sun sets.

Did you know?

Anything that takes drivers' attention away from the road can be considered a distraction, and that includes phones, food, passengers, and even vehicle features like a GPS system. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says nine people in the U.S. are killed every day in crashes that involve a distracted driver. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says distracted driving claimed the lives of 3,308 people in 2022. These distracted driving numbers reflect a growing trend of distracted driving-related incidents.

Issues that may arise at certain vehicle mileage intervals



Modern automobiles are technological marvels. As advancements in automotive technology have made cars more reliable than ever, drivers may feel as though vehicle ownership also is more hands-off than ever before. Though it's true built-in diagnostic technology is designed to alert drivers when issues arise, it can still benefit motorists to recognize when certain issues may arise. Cars and the people who drive them are different, so mileage intervals are not always the best measuring stick for maintenance issues. However, the following rundown can serve as a guidebook for drivers who want to know what to expect at various mileage intervals.

- 30,000 miles:** The experts at Auto Trader note that disposable engine air filters usually last between 15,000 and 30,000 miles. If it's been around 30,000 miles since the engine air filter has been replaced, now is a good time to replace this important part, which prevents components like dirt and debris from getting into the engine.
- 50,000 to 60,000 miles:** It's around this time that drivers may need to replace their vehicle batteries. Little-used vehicles may need a new battery much earlier, as lengthy periods of little or no use adversely affect the life expectancy of vehicle batteries. Brakes also may need to be replaced around this time, as the experts at AutoZone® note that most drivers get between two and five years out of a set of brake pads. If that sounds like a significant disparity, it is, and that's because driver behavior is a significant variable affecting the life of the pads. Drivers who brake hard will likely need to replace their brake pads with greater frequency than drivers who brake slowly.
- 50,000 to 90,000 miles:** As noted, there is no uniform guideline governing when vehicle components will need to be replaced. Hoses are a good example of that, as recommendations regarding when to replace hoses range from 50,000 to 90,000 miles. That's a significant gap, but drivers can be on the safe side and start discussing the status of their hoses with their mechanics around the 50,000 mile marker. It's unlikely the hoses will make it all the way to 90,000 miles before they need to be replaced, but drivers can keep that mileage marker in mind and aim to replace the hoses before that point even if no issue has arisen. Timing belts also tend to fail between 80,000 and 100,000 miles, so this is another part to consider replacing as a vehicle reaches this point. These mileage markers are not set in stone, and should only serve as a guideline for drivers who want to stay ahead of vehicle repairs. Drivers also are urged to discuss any additional changes that might be necessary with their mechanics during routine maintenance appointments.

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The short, dark days of winter approach



Winter is quickly approaching and that means fewer hours of daylight. To be sure you can be seen by others

and your visibility is not compromised, check your vehicle's lights and wipers, says the non-profit Car Care

Council.

"The days are getting shorter, so it is a good time to check that your vehicle's

wipers and lighting are working properly because the chance of an accident increases if you can't see or be seen," said Nathan Perrine, executive director, Car Care Council. "From the driver's seat you may not notice a light that isn't working, so check all of your car's lights and replace those that are out. Also, be sure to inspect and replace wiper blades so you can see clearly when wet weather hits."

The wiper system keeps excessive water, snow and dirt from building up on the windshield, maintaining clear visibility. Many factors can accelerate the replacement interval of wipers, including operating conditions (winter conditions are tough on

wiper blades), frequency of use, material and type of wipers and sunny weather. In fact, wiper blades can deteriorate faster and need more frequent replacement in desert states.

Lights are normal wear items that require periodic inspection and replacement. The lighting system provides nighttime visibility; signals and alerts other drivers; and supplies light for viewing instruments and the vehicle's interior. In addition to replacing dimming, rapidly blinking and non-functioning lights, the following tips can help keep you safe:

If there is any doubt on whether or not your headlights should be on, turn them on. Lights not only help

you see better in early twilight, they also make it easier for other drivers to see you.

Keep headlights, tail lights and signal lights clean. External dirt and debris can dim operational lights from being seen by others.

Make sure that your headlights are properly aimed. Misaimed headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.

Don't overdrive your headlights; you should be able to stop inside the illuminated area, otherwise you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.

For more information about keeping your vehicle in safe, dependable operating condition, visit the Car Care Council website at www.carcare.org.

The benefits of detailing your vehicle

• It helps you to Relax and Relieve Stress:

There is nothing like getting into your car and seeing that it is pristinely clean. Especially after driving around weeks and months at a time without washing your vehicle. When you are always on the go with work, making multiple stops around town and just flat out exhausted at the end of the day it's nice to have a change of scenery. It's a good idea to take a break sometimes, kick your feet up and simply relax.

• Your Car Smells Fantastic:

Getting into a vehicle that smells fantastic and looks great just does wonders for you and sets the mood for your day. Certain fragrances can have a positive impact on your mood, health, and performance.

• It Makes a Good Impression on People:

In either case, where your career requires you to work with businesses or consumers, showing up to see your client in a well-polished vehicle says good things about

you. It subtly sends the message that you are thorough, professional, trustworthy while showing that you mean business. If you are in the people business, you know that the small detail can help win over new clients.

• It Makes a Great Gift for Birthdays & Holidays:

Believe it or not, surprising your coworker, friend or family member with a surprise truck or car detail service can go a long way. It makes for a great surprise for someone special and a great way to show your appreciation for someone close to you.

• Detailing Services can extend the life of your upholstery:

Detailing your vehicle can protect your interior from your dashboard to your seats from wearing, aging and tearing. Keep your leather seats in great condition with an interior detail service. You'd be surprised how much dirt, soil, and various substances accumulate in your car's interior. It's recommended to have your car's interior detailed at least twice a year to

keep your car from accumulating an undesired aroma.

• Mobile Detailing services are brought right to your doorstep and provide your convenience:

Pass the work onto someone else. Recapture your time and use it on something else that you value.

• Convenience for Truck Drivers:

If you drive trucks for a living and want to maximize your downtime, use a mobile truck wash service to have your truck washed during your downtime. It's just one less place you have to drive.

• Ceramic coating your vehicle provides far superior protection than traditional wax coatings:

Traditional waxes have a shelf life of only a few months as the weather dissolves the coating over a short period. With strong hydrophobic properties, the coating does not interact with water and is less impacted by high temperatures. Surprisingly, the ceramic coating can last between 3 to 5 years. Adding a long-term protective film to your

vehicle can reduce the likelihood of chips, scratches, and discoloration caused by the debris in the environment.

• Hand car washing does not scratch your vehicle's paint job:

When you invest a lot of money and take pride in your vehicle, you don't want just anyone touching your paint job. When you have a unique paint job and your car is

your baby, its best to leave your car cleaning to a professional. Cleaning fabrics from car wash machines may be abrasive damage to the outer coat of your paint job so you have to be careful. If you have a soft-top roof, you'll need to seek a delicate hand car wash as an alternative to a drive-thru car wash.

• Headlight Restoration Can Save you money:

Over time, debris, contaminants and UV light from the sun takes a toll on your vehicle's paint job and headlights. It's a good idea to regularly



Polishing a headlight during vehicle detailing.

maintain your vehicle. If you neglect to take care of the small details like your headlights, you may notice your lights do not shine as brightly as they used to. Headlight restoration is often a more practical solution to replacing your headlights. This is especially true for vehicles that have sat in a garage for an extended period.

• You get the most value when selling your old car:

Getting your engine bay detailed and having your car in peak appearance

increases perceived value when haggling with a private buyer or dealership. A good looking car is going to inspire consumer confidence and is more difficult to devalue. Therefore helping you command your original asking price.

Source: Article City
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Motorist checklist for Fall and Winter months

The last thing any driver needs is a vehicle that breaks down in cold, harsh winter weather. The Car Care Council recommends that car owners follow its Fall Car Care Month checklist and inspect their vehicles before the temperatures drop and severe weather hits.

• Heating, Wipers & Lights
Make sure heaters, defrosters and wipers work properly.

Consider winter wiper blades and use cold-weather washer fluid. As a general rule, wiper blades should be replaced every six months.

Check to see that all exterior and interior lights work and headlights are properly aimed.

• Tires & Brakes

Check the tire tread depth and tire pressure of all tires, including the spare. If snow and ice are a problem in your area, consider special tires designed to grip slick roads.

During winter, tire pressure should be checked weekly.

Have the brakes checked. The braking system is the vehicle's most important safety item.

• Gas, Oil & Filters

Keep your gas tank at least half full throughout the cold weather to prevent moisture from forming in gas lines and possibly freezing.

Be diligent about changing the oil and filter at recommended intervals. Dirty oil can spell trouble in winter. Consider changing to "winter weight" oil if you live in a cold climate.

• Check the fuel, air and transmission filters at the same time.

• System Checks – Charging, Cooling & Exhaust

Have the battery and charging system checked, as cold weather is hard on batteries.

Clean, flush and put new antifreeze in the cooling

system. As a rule of thumb, this should be done every two years.

Have the exhaust system checked for carbon monoxide leaks, which can be especially dangerous during cold weather driving when windows are closed.

• Pack the Essentials

Make sure that your ice scraper and snow brush are accessible and ready to use.

Stock an emergency kit with jumper cables, a flashlight, blankets, extra clothes, bottled water, nonperishable food and a first aid kit with any needed medication.

Order a free copy of the popular Car Care Guide for your glove box by visiting www.carcare.org/car-care-guide.

"Winter magnifies existing problems like hard starts, sluggish performance and rough idling, so a little car care now is



a sensible way to avoid being stranded out in the cold later," said Nathan Perrine, executive director, Car Care Council. "Whether you perform the inspection and maintenance yourself or go to a trusted repair shop, it's a small investment of time

and money to help avoid the cost and hassle of a breakdown during the cold winter months ahead."

About the Car Care Council

The non-profit Car Care Council is the source of

information for the "Be Car Care Aware" consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers. For the latest car care news, visit <http://carcare.org>.

Taking care of your transmission

The transmission is a critical component of your vehicle. It's responsible for transferring the engine's power to the wheels and ensuring you can smoothly change gears while driving. Your transmission plays a vital role in your car's overall performance and efficiency, allowing for seamless acceleration, deceleration, and maneuverability. You need to address transmission issues promptly to avoid breakdowns and costly repairs.

Common signs of transmission problems include:

• Slipping gears: If your car changes gears unexpectedly or struggles to stay in gear,

the transmission might be slipping.

• Delayed engagement: A delay when shifting from park to drive can indicate transmission issues.

• Fluid leaks: Transmission fluid leaks are often marked by a red or brown fluid under your vehicle.

• Burning smell: A burning odor can signal overheating transmission fluid.

How to Address Transmission Troubles

Take your vehicle to a trusted mechanic as soon as possible for a diagnosis. It might only need the transmission fluid changed and

or flushed. A shift solenoid replacement might also be necessary, as faulty solenoids can cause significant gear-shifting problems if left unchecked. Those with manual transmissions might need to invest in a clutch replacement if their transmission is failing.

Preventative Maintenance:

It's important to change your transmission fluid, but the type of transmission you have affects your ideal changing interval. If you drive manual, most manufacturers will recommend changing your transmis-

sion fluid every 30,000 to 60,000 miles. If you have automatic, you can typically boost that range up to 60,000 to 100,000 miles.

There's no harm in changing your fluid early. Drivers with manual transmissions who put heavy-duty use into their vehicles may want to change their fluid every 15,000 miles. Likewise, changing your automatic transmission fluid every 30,000 miles may be necessary under some circumstances.

Consulting a trained technician is the best course of action.

and then endure extremely high temperatures without oxidizing, thickening or turning black. The reason synthetic oils need less frequent changes is that they can maintain their superior properties two to three times longer than conventional oils. Though each vehicle manufacturer is different and drivers are urged to consult their owner's manuals regarding synthetic oil change interval recommendations, it's not uncommon for modern vehicles to range between 5,000 and 7,000 miles before they need

Winter safety kit for your vehicle

• Ice scraper and snow brush

• Blanket, gloves, hats and extra socks

• Extra clothing and boots

• Jumper cables or portable jump starter

• Bottled water

• Nonperishable snacks

• Portable power supply to recharge your cell phone

• Candle powered heater

• Fire extinguisher

• First-aid kit and manual

• Shovel

• Flares

• Tire repair kit



• Spare tire

• Portable air compressor

• Bag of sand or kitty litter to help with traction

• Extra windshield fluid

• Simple tool kit

• Battery-powered radio

• Battery-powered flashlight

• Extra batteries

• Note pad and pen

• Extra medication

Did you know?



Drivers undoubtedly have noticed their vehicles need less frequent oil changes than cars once required. The longtime standard oil change interval of once every 3,000 miles no longer applies, and that's

thanks to the pivot away from conventional oil to synthetic oil. The molecular structure of synthetic oil and its ability to perform better at extreme temperature means drivers can now drive

significantly longer distances between oil changes. In fact, Car and Driver notes that synthetic motor oils provide better startup performance and flow at temperatures down to minus-40 Fahrenheit

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