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Drive Smart. Arrive Safely.



SPRING 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Spring Into Spring!	1
Driving After the Daylight Saving Time Change	2
Study Calculates How Much Time to Allow for Traffic	2
Drivers Who Multitask Often Overestimate Their Skills	3
Want to Drive Safely? Listen to These Songs	3
April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month	3



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Spring Into Spring!

Get ready to prepare your car early for the sizzling summer heat.

After your vehicle has faced brutal winter weather, it will need some proper maintenance to be ready for warm spring weather. Here are some important steps to take before heading out on the road.



- ✓ **Start with the exterior of the car.** Wash your car to remove all traces of salt from the bodywork, which will cause damage and corrosion if not properly removed.
- ✓ **Inspect windows and wiper blades.** Clear windows of de-icer and grime. Ensure that windshield wiper blades are not worn and replace them if needed. Clean washer jets to remove dirt and/or unblock them.
- ✓ **Check tire pressure.** Tires expand when hot so check them first thing in the morning. Using a digital tire pressure gauge is best for an accurate reading. All tires should be properly inflated, including the spare, to increase gas mileage, lengthen tire life and decrease the likelihood of a blowout.
- ✓ **Don't forget your oil.** Adequate lubrication is one of the key factors to keeping your engine running smoothly. Temperature seriously affects your oil and its lubricating effectiveness, so consider changing the grade of your engine oil in hot temperatures. Check

your owner's manual for the oil viscosity grade recommended for your vehicle.

- ✓ **Breathe easier with a clean air filter.** Remember to replace your vehicle's cabin air filter annually or more often in areas with heavy contaminants. During the warm months, contaminants such as pollen, dust, mold spores and smog can enter a vehicle through the air conditioning and ventilation systems.
- ✓ **Avoid overheating.** Overheating, especially as the weather gets warmer, is the leading cause of preventable breakdowns and one of the main areas where prevention is much cheaper than the cure. If your antifreeze is more than a few years old, play it safe and flush and fill your cooling system.
- ✓ **Add a coolant.** An inexpensive and easy insurance against engine overheating is to check the coolant level. It's been shown to reduce engine temperature as much as 30 degrees or more. It also helps condition seals to prevent leaks. If you notice the coolant is not at the proper fill level, it is possible that there is a leak in the system and it should be checked out by a certified technician right away. Warning: make sure you wait until your vehicle has cooled down before opening the bottle overflow cap to avoid injury.
- ✓ **Check your belts and hoses.** A worn or loose belt can cause the engine to overheat. A cracked belt or a hose that is unusually soft or overly hard needs replacing. Make sure hose clamps are tight, and have the ends checked for cracks or corrosion. Because extreme heat can cause leaks and other damage, keep an eye out for hard, blistered or spongy hoses. If any of these warning signs are present, have the hoses replaced immediately.

Driving After the Daylight Saving Time Change



Since the time change, you may have noticed that driving has become more difficult because of sun glare, more people out during daylight hours, etc.

Here are some tips to help you with adjusting your driving habits:

- Many more pedestrians, joggers, children, walkers and bicyclists will be outside during the evening commute because of the longer daylight hours. You should drive slower and be extra alert, particularly in residential neighborhoods and school zones.
- Be prepared to face reduced visibility during the morning commute because it may be darker.
- Early morning sun may also cause reflections off car windows, hoods or other metallic portions of automobiles and can be a serious hazard. The glare may cause temporary blindness. To reduce glare, invest in and wear high-quality sunglasses and adjust your car's sun visors as needed.
- Check your vision regularly and take the time to get your eyes examined. The American Optometric Association recommends that everyone under age 60 have a comprehensive eye exam at least every two years, and annually after age 60.
- Vision becomes impaired as the sun goes down. If you have trouble with night vision or glare, limit driving to daytime hours.
- Keep your car clean, or at least your headlights, mirrors and windshield. These either help you see better or act as an extension of your existing vision; so use them to your advantage. If necessary, add a larger rearview mirror to increase the range of visibility.
- Keep your eyes up – look at the road ahead to see trouble before you reach it. In the city, look at least one block ahead; on the highway, look at the section of the road you'll reach in 20 to 30 seconds.
- Most vehicles are equipped with 'high beam' headlights. It is illegal to turn on your high beam lights in the face of another driver. If you are using your high beam headlights, dim them if you see another vehicle approaching.

Study Calculates How Much Time to Allow for Traffic

Drivers in the nation's most-congested cities should add 38 to 95 minutes to many routine 20-minute trips if they want to arrive on time, warns a new study on gauging unpredictable traffic.

For the Washington, D.C., area, the study says, drivers should set aside nearly two hours - 114 minutes - to arrive on time 19 out of 20 times. For the Dallas area, it's 80 minutes and for San Diego, 58 minutes.

Fair warning, though: This applies only to the part of the trip on limited access roads, such as interstate highways, some toll roads and other roads that don't have traffic signals.

That's from a new mathematical index offered today by the Texas Transportation Institute in its annual Urban Mobility Report, which analyzes congestion patterns in 498 of the nation's urban areas to try to give motorists and shippers reliable driving times.

For the index, Institute researchers crunched data from INRIX, a traffic reporting service, the U.S. Transportation Department and state transportation departments.



Reliable trip times are important for drivers when they're trying to conduct business and go about daily routines. They're also important to truckers who transport goods. In 2011, trucks racked up \$27 billion in congestion costs - and some of that was passed on to consumers, the report says.

The institute found that in 2011, congestion caused Americans to travel 5.5 billion additional hours and purchase an extra 2.9 billion gallons of fuel for a congestion cost of \$121 billion.

While congestion is below the 2005 peak, researchers say, it's no cause for celebration: As the economy recovers, congestion will rebound.

For the fourth year in a row, the Washington area, including Northern Virginia, was the most congested urban area in the country. It was followed by Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York.

Find out the level of congestion in your city here: <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/congestion-data/>.

Source: Detroit Free Press, Feb. 5, 2013

Drivers Who Multitask Often Overestimate Their Skills

Think you're pretty good at driving while texting or talking on the phone? If so, you're not alone: A new study finds that about 70 percent of college students surveyed think they're above average at multitasking, while another 11 percent said they were average. It's a prospect that's unlikely, if not impossible.

Researchers from the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety found that those who spend the most time doing multiple things at once, such as talking on the phone while driving, were actually the worst at multitasking.

The study doesn't directly address people's actual abilities to stay focused while driving. But it does suggest something else -- people who multitask tend to do so because they're impulsive, overconfident and seek sensation, not because they're actually good at it.

"Multitasking" may sound like a modern term, but researchers have been studying how people handle doing two or more things at once for more than a century.

Our ability to multitask is surprisingly limited. People cannot perform two tasks that require the same type of thinking or perception without one of the tasks suffering.

Why? There seems to be a "bottleneck" in the brain as it tries to respond to two tasks. When two tasks require a response, one of the two will be delayed.

For the study, students took a test that forces them to memorize letters and do math problems at the same time. It's designed to mimic the challenges of multitasking. The 25 percent of students who did the best on the test were the least likely to actually multitask in real life.

Source: HealthDay.com, Jan. 23, 2013

Want to Drive Safely? Listen to These Songs



New research has revealed which songs drivers listen to can influence how safe they are on the roads.

The top 10 safest songs to drive to are:

1. Come Away With Me – Norah Jones
2. Billionaire Feat. Bruno Mars – Travie McCoy
3. I'm Yours – Jason Mraz
4. The Scientist – Coldplay
5. Tiny Dancer – Elton John
6. Cry Me a River – Justin Timberlake
7. I Don't Want to Miss a Thing – Aerosmith
8. Karma Police – Radiohead
9. Never Had a Dream Come True – S Club 7
10. Skinny Love – Bon Iver

Each of the songs have an optimum tempo of a song for safe driving, mimicking the human heartbeat at around 60 to 80 beats per minute.

The study, conducted at London Metropolitan University, also revealed the type of songs that cause motorists to drive dangerously.

Not surprising, music that is noisy, upbeat and increases a driver's heart rate can be a deadly mix. Fast beats cause excitement that can lead people to concentrate more on the music than the road and to speed up to match the song's beat.

Genres of music were also measured during the experiment and revealed variations between male and female drivers including:

- Hip-hop made a female driver drive far more aggressively, breaking harder and accelerating faster, than her male counterpart.
- The heavy metal playlist caused the fastest driving among males in the group.
- The dance playlist caused the fastest driving among women in the group.
- The male and female drivers who listened to the classical playlist drove the most erratically.

Source: The Telegraph, Jan. 8, 2013

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month



The National Safety Council estimates 1 in 4 crashes involve cell phone use while driving. Each April, the Council observes Distracted Driving Awareness Month to remember the lives that have been tragically lost in cell phone related crashes, but also to bring national attention to the issue of cell phone distracted driving.

What were you thinking?

The focus of this year's campaign - What were you thinking? - is on cognitive distraction, or the distraction to the brain from a cell phone conversation. Many people have a false sense of security that hands-free devices are safer - but research indicates no safety benefit from these devices as the distraction to the brain remains. The unfortunate truth is that your brain can miss seeing up to 50 percent of your driving environment when you are talking on a cell phone. This could be a stop sign, a traffic light or even a pedestrian.

Help Spread the Word

Join the National Safety Council in telling others about the dangers of cognitive distraction this April. If you have already made the pledge to drive cell free, great! If you haven't, there is no time like the present.

Remember, no phone conversation is worth a life.

Many states have made the use of hand-held devices illegal while operating a motor vehicle. It is your responsibility to be familiar with these laws as they pertain to the state or states in which you operate your motor vehicle. For more information, please visit http://www.qhsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html.