

# Safety Topic of the Month

## Summer Driving

*Info taken from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*

Prevention and planning may take a little time up front, but will spare you from dealing with the consequences of a breakdown or worse yet, a highway crash later.

### **BEFORE YOU GO**

#### **Car Service**

Regular maintenance such as tune-ups, oil changes, battery checks, and tire rotations go a long way toward preventing breakdowns. If your vehicle has not been serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations, schedule a preventive maintenance checkup with your mechanic right away.

#### **Emergency Roadside Kit**

Even a well-maintained vehicle can break down, so it's advisable to put together an emergency roadside kit to carry with you. A cell phone tops the list of suggested emergency kit contents since it allows you to call for help when and where you need it. Suggested emergency roadside kit contents:

- Cell phone and car charger
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Flares and a white flag
- Jumper cables
- Tire pressure gauge
- Jack (and ground mat) for changing a tire
- Work gloves and a change of clothes
- Basic repair tools and some duct tape (for temporarily repairing a hose leak!)
- Water and paper towels for cleaning
- Nonperishable food, drinking water, and medicines
- Extra windshield washer fluid
- Maps
- Emergency blankets and towels

## **Check for Recalls**

Is your vehicle under a recall? Find out! Use NHTSA's free Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) look-up tool at [safercar.gov/vin](https://www.safercar.gov/vin) to quickly find out if your specific vehicle is under a recall. And if it is, get it fixed as soon as possible, for free.

## **ON THE ROAD**

### **Stay Alert**

On long trips stop along the way to take a group stretch, get something to eat and drink, return any calls or text messages, and change drivers if you're feeling tired or drowsy. Consider staying overnight at a hotel or family resort.

Resist the urge to check your phone. Keep your eyes on the road, hands on the wheel, and concentration on the task of driving. No one's lives—neither your passengers nor any other road users—are worth a phone call or text. And remember, law enforcement officers across the Nation are now using innovative strategies to aggressively enforce their State distracted driving laws.

### **Motorcycle/Bicyclists**

Warmer weather attracts many types of roadway users, including motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows other road users to anticipate your movement and find a safe lane position.

Leave more distance between you and a motorcycle—3 or 4 seconds worth. Motorcycles are much lighter than other vehicles and can stop in much shorter distances. While they have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as every motorist, these road users are more vulnerable because they do not have the protection of a car or truck.

### **Be a Mindful Driver**

Be mindful of pedestrians. Things to remember as a driver:

- You can encounter pedestrians anytime and anywhere.
- Distracted walking is part of the distracted traffic epidemic. Be mindful of pedestrians.
- Pedestrians can be very hard to see - especially in bad weather or at night.
- Stop for pedestrians who are in a crosswalk, even if it's not marked. This will help drivers in the other lanes see the pedestrian in time to stop.
- Cars stopped in the street may be stopped to allow pedestrians to cross. Do not pass if there is any doubt.
- Do not assume that pedestrians can see you or that they will act predictably. They may be distracted, or physically or mentally impaired.
- When you are turning and waiting for a "gap" in traffic, watch for pedestrians who may have moved into your intended path.
- Be especially attentive around schools and in neighborhoods where children are active. Drive the way you want people to drive in front of your own home.

## **KIDS & CARS**

### **Inside Cars**

Heatstroke can occur when a child is left unattended in a parked vehicle. Remember:

- Never leave a child alone in a parked car, even with the windows rolled down, or air conditioning on. Children's body temperature can heat up 3 to 5 times faster than adults.
- Always look in both the front and back of the vehicle before locking the door and walking away.
- Heatstroke can occur in temperatures as low as 57 degrees. On an 80-degree day, temperatures inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels in 10 minutes.
- Always lock your vehicle doors and trunk and keep the keys out of a child's reach.

### **Around Cars**

Even when children are not inside a vehicle, it can be dangerous for them. Take these precautions to protect children around your vehicle:

- Before you back out of a driveway or parking spot, walk around your vehicle to check for children. When children run and play, they are often oblivious to vehicles around them. Remember that every vehicle has a blind zone. Large vehicles such as trucks, SUVs, RVs, and vans are more likely than cars to be involved in backovers.
- Lock your vehicle's doors at all times when it's not in use. Put the keys where children can't get to them. Children who enter vehicles on their own with no adult supervision can be killed or injured by power windows, seat belt entanglement, vehicle rollaway, heatstroke, or trunk entrapment.

Visit [www.safercar.gov/parents](http://www.safercar.gov/parents) to find out more about how to keep children safe in and around vehicles.