

Safety Alert

FIVE STEPS TO SAFER SUMMER DRIVING

The following safety alert is another article provided by OnRoad safety magazine and provides us some guidance on driving and driving safety. Please use this as a tool in your personal lives to ensure you and your family remains safe while out on the highways.

Five Steps to SAFER SUMMER DRIVING

After dealing with winter's typically nasty weather problems, you might consider summer a welcome break. But now is no time to become complacent on the road, because summer still brings its own set of issues for drivers. If you follow these five steps, you'll greatly improve your safety on the road this season.

1. Prepare Your Vehicle

Make sure your vehicle is in summer-ready condition before temperatures peak. Regularly check that your tire pressure meets manufacturer specifications, since underinflated tires are at risk of failing in the heat. You can usually find those specifications on the inside panel of the driver's side door or in the owner's manual. While you're checking tire pressure, check the tread, too. And make sure all fluids are at



the proper level, including oil, water, radiator coolant, brake fluid, and windshield washer fluid.

2. Pack Wisely

An overloaded vehicle strains tires and increases the odds of a tire failure. And if you overload an SUV, you make the vehicle more top heavy and more susceptible to a dangerous rollover. No matter what kind of vehicle you drive, when you're packing for a vacation or other long trip don't overdo it. Carefully secure any luggage stored inside the vehicle, so it doesn't come loose and become a flying projectile in a crash. Check your owner's manual to see if the manufacturer recommends adjusted tire pressure settings for heavier loads, which is often the case.

3. Watch Out for Children

With many schools closed for the summer, more children will be playing outside and riding bikes, scooters and skateboards in or near the road. Stay on alert in areas where you're likely to find children — near intersections, residential areas, community parks and playgrounds, and even where there is on-street parking (since a child could dart out from between parked cars without warning). Slow down when children are near and be prepared to stop quickly if needed.

4. Adapt to the Weather

Summer weather can range from dangerously high temperatures, to heavy thunderstorms, to hurricane-force winds. Just as you would in the winter, check the forecast in advance and plan accordingly. On rainy days, build extra time in your schedule, reduce your speed to below the posted limit, and stay at least 4 seconds behind the vehicle in front of you, so you'll have the time and space to stop safely. If visibility is reduced dramatically or winds become very high, find a safe place to stop and wait out the storm. But don't park near trees or power lines, which could fall in heavy wind. When temperatures are extremely hot, don't drive more than a couple of hours without stopping to give you and your vehicle a break.

5. Refresh Your Emergency Kit

Swap out winter gear like salt, blankets and shovels and replace it with extra water for cooling an overheated radiator and a spare pair of sunglasses. If you carry non-perishable food and drinking water, toss expired items and replenish your supply. And no matter what the season, always carry a flashlight with spare batteries, a cell phone with a power adapter, jumper cables, a first aid kit, and road triangles or flares.

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