

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Get in gear for spring and summer with car care essentials

1. Watch to see if your engine is hard to start, uses gas excessively, is sluggish, smokes, or is excessively noisy.

2. Be sure that your cooling system is in good condition. The advent of more hot weather could bring about the failure of a hose, belt or other components. How long has it been since you checked your anti-freeze/coolant?

3. How about the condition of your tires? Heavy loads at high speeds on hot surfaces are hard on tires. To avoid failure, make sure tires have plenty of tread and are properly inflated.

4. How's your oil? Oil is not only a lubricant, it is a coolant as well. And clean, well filtered oil will help your engine survive the heat.

5. Check your transmission. Does it slip when you shift gears? Is it noisy? Does it shift erratically? For those who tow a trailer, it is especially vital for your transmission to be in the best working order possible.

6. Be sure that brakes stop evenly, and are not making any "funny" noises.

7. Watch to see that lights are working and that they are focused correctly. Also check turning signals and windshield wipers for smearing or streaking.

Now that you've determined some of your car's problems, you will need to find a competent auto repair shop. If this task seems overwhelming, it doesn't have to be. The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, an organization that is highly respected in the automotive industry, is an independent, non-profit group which gives voluntary certification exams to technicians.

Motorists can be assured of finding competent automotive service and repair by asking for ASE certified technicians when visiting service stations, car dealerships and independent shops.

Businesses that employ ASE certified technicians usually display the ASE outdoor sign, a large white sign with a distinctive blue seal onto which are printed the initials, A, S and E.

CAR TROUBLES CAN COMPOUND THEMSELVES

Pay attention to a car's warning signals when it's "acting up." It could pay enormous dividends, says Car Care Council, which reports cases of catalytic converters being damaged through neglect of other components.

Part of the car's exhaust system, the converter, turns carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons into harmless carbon dioxide and water, thereby reducing harmful emissions.

Too many unburned hydrocarbons, as might occur in the exhaust of a car that needs a tune-up, would cause the catalytic converter to become hot. When there's excessive heat inside the converter, it may become red hot and destroy itself.

What causes excess burned gas? A classic case, reports the Council, is the driver who ignores the fact that his car is running rough and spewing black smoke from the exhaust.

He may realize his automatic choke needs servicing, but delays getting the work done. Soon his spark plugs are fouled. The engine is misfiring, and the condition is feeding on itself.

The worst is yet to come. Once the catalytic converter is destroyed, excessive back pressure in the exhaust system burns the car's exhaust valves.

The repair bill, instead of a possible \$75 for a tune-up, now could be \$800 for a tune-up, valve job and a new catalytic converter (which should have lasted for tens of thousands of miles longer).

Don't ignore your car's plea for help, emphasizes the Car Care Council, and do not use leaded fuel in a car designed for unleaded fuel only. That, too, can destroy a catalytic converter.

Even if your car is in tip top shape, safeguarding it from summer heat is very important. The most common complaint from summer drivers is that the heat affects a car's radiator, causing it to boil

over. However, automotive experts believe that heat can affect the entire car, not just the coolant in the radiator.

Tires that are "overheated" can blow out or shred if the recommended air

pressure is not maintained.

Strong sunlight combined with pollutants and salt can damage a car's finish. Washing your car regularly is the best way to combat this problem.

Keeping your car in the best condition possible with regular checkups is the best way to assure a car's longevity and the best way for you to enjoy a safe, happy spring and summer!

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