

Spring is the time to tune up your car for warm weather months ahead

Auto maintenance advice takes the heat out of summer driving

The dog days of summer are on their way, and it's time to take the moth balls out of your swimsuits. But, while you are preparing yourself for the hot months ahead, don't forget to get your car in shape as well.

Since it is often difficult to know when your car needs attention, the following suggestions from Car Care Council will aid you in knowing what needs to be done to your auto and when to do it.

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 antifreeze/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 Auto-

otive 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.

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! SC895493



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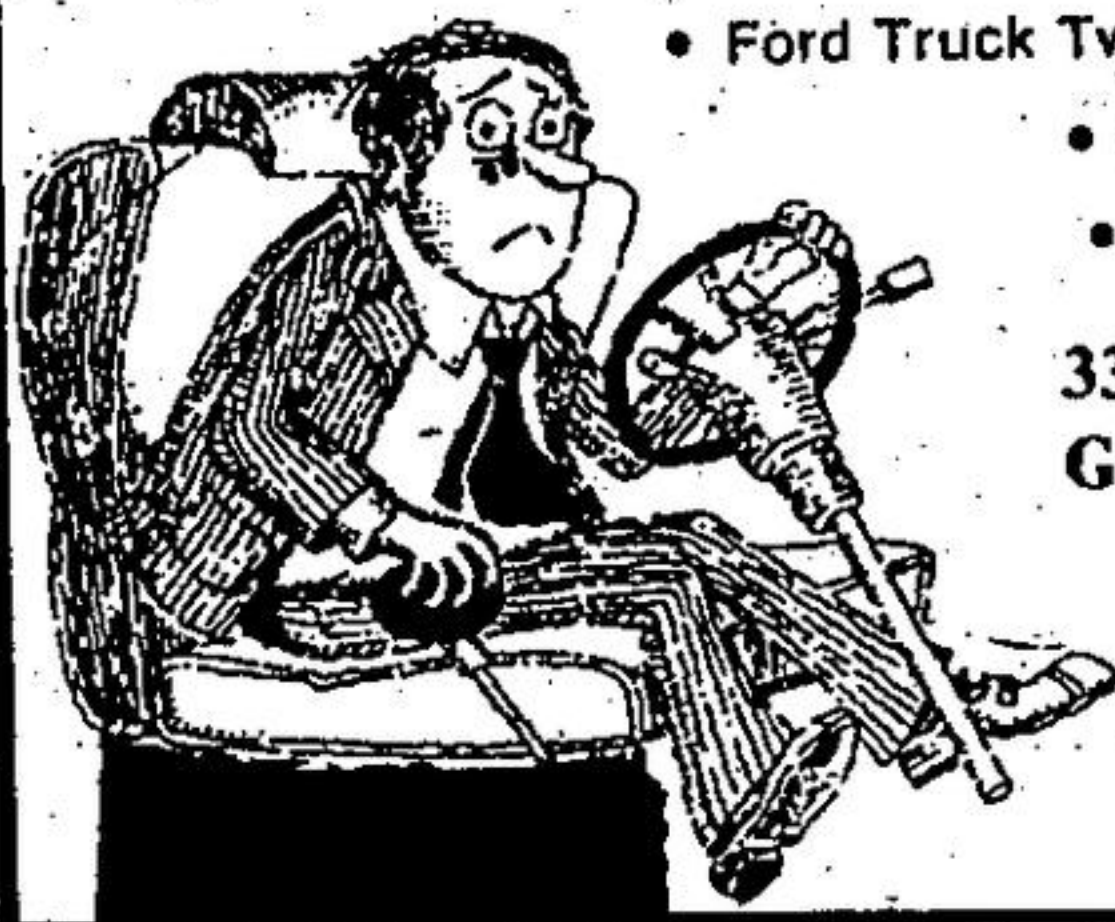
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