

# Taking preventative measures

by Norm Hudecki

For most of us, spring and summer mean vacation time. And if your vacation includes driving, some basic preventive measures can mean the difference between a refreshing break and a disastrous outing.

A motor oil and filter change should be at the top of your maintenance list before a long trip. Consult your owner's manual for the proper viscosity grade.

If you intend to pull a camper, boat or other type of trailer on your trip, it's important that you have a vehicle equipped with the proper towing package and use the right motor oil.

Use a heavy-duty motor oil, such as Valvoline Racing Formula, to take the stress of towing.

Let the owner's manual be your guide to determine if and how you should pull a load with your vehicle.

A complete maintenance check-up should also include:

Checking all belts and hoses to make sure

they are in good condition.

Checking all reservoirs for the correct amount of fluid. These include the brake fluid, transmission fluid and power steering fluid.

Tuning up the car and making sure all electrical systems are operating properly.

Checking the tires for correct pressure and to detect signs of abnormal wear.

Checking the exhaust system.

Checking the windshield wiper blades and filling the wiper fluid reservoir.

Checking the engine coolant level for the correct concentration of fluid.

Checking the air-conditioning system to make sure it is not

leaking, is properly charged with refrigerant and is operating.

When you stop the car to fill up with gasoline or to give the travelers a break, you should pop the hood and check the oil and fluid levels again.

Vacations can provide memorable experiences for everyone. A little attention to the car can ensure that the memories aren't bad ones.



## Travel tips for recreational vehicles

Motor homes, also known as recreational vehicles, may present a great challenge to those who are driving them for the first time.

The Hamilton Auto Club believes that experienced motorists already possess the skills needed to drive a motor home and with a few helpful suggestions, adjusting to a motor home is not difficult.

Check rear view mirrors - before leaving, take a moment to sit in the driver's seat and adjust all mirrors for optional road views.

Be aware of handling differences - when turning, remember that the front and rear wheels track much farther apart than those of a car. Also, bigger vehicles take more time to accelerate and slow down, so you will need more time to brake, change lanes and enter a busy highway.

Know your vehicles size - Know your vehicle's height and weight so you can comply with road, bridge and tunnel restrictions.

Recreational drivers need to be aware of the following additional considerations when towing a trailer:

Use the right trailer hitch - hitches come in a variety of sizes. Have a professional attach one that is right for your vehicle and the trailer. Make sure the hitch is locked and that the safety chains are connected independent of the primary hitch.

Connect brake and signal lights - always check that the trailer's brakes, turn signals and tail lights are synchronized.

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