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# Car Care

A Special Supplement to the Independent & Free Press and The Advocate - May 1998

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## Putting the brakes on potential disaster

Mechanic Jason Medeiros of Hassell Automotive Limited inspects the brake calipers as he replaces the brakes on a car at the service centre's Mountainview Road North location.

Photo by Ted Brown



## What's your brake I.Q.? Take this lifesaving quiz

**B**rakes are the most critical safety item on a vehicle. After tires, they are the leading vehicle defect reported in highway accidents, according to some North American studies. But how much do you know about your brakes?

Find out by taking this simple brake quiz. It could save your life.

1. If your car pulls to the left when brakes are applied:

- a) Your left front tire may be under-inflated.
- b) Your right front brake is not working properly.
- c) Your left front-wheel bearing may be failing.
- d) All of the above.

The correct answer is "d".

2. When brakes squeal, you should:

- a) Replace all pads and linings.
- b) Have the rotors resurfaced.
- c) Ignore the noise, it's normal, and turn up your radio.
- d) Have a mechanic/automotive service technician check it out.

e) All of the above.

The correct answer is "d". A brake inspection may disclose that one of the other answers also applies. Brake squeal is a common problem, indicating a need for corrective measures. Only a thorough brake inspection can reveal the true cause of the problem.

3. Brake fluid in the master cylinder should be checked and replenished as needed. When doing so, you should use:

- a) Whatever good brake fluid you may have in your garage.
- b) A good quality brake fluid meeting the specifications recommended in your owner's manual.
- c) A quality grade 20 weight motor oil.
- d) All of the above.

The correct answer is "b". Always use brake fluid from a freshly opened container. Use only the specific grade of oil recommended in your owners manual.

4. Most brake lining pads are now made of:

- a) Steel wool-like strands in a heat-

resistant resin binder.

- b) High-friction, heat-resistant asbestos fibre.
- c) Ceramic-based friction material.
- d) Any or all of the above.

The correct answer is "a". Asbestos, now considered a hazardous waste, has not been used in brake linings for a long time.

5. Do you understand your ABS brakes? Answer true or false (score half a point for each of the following):

- a) Even with ABS, on a slippery road I should pump the brakes for maximum stopping power.

The correct answer is "false". The ABS system will pump only the brake or brakes on wheels that are slipping, the other brakes remain fully applied, so you'll stop faster. The ABS system can pump the brakes that need to be pumped many times a second.

- b) When I press down on the pedal on a slippery day, I feel the pedal press back against my foot and I hear a humming noise. This means the brakes are

failing.

The correct answer is "false". This is normal, and tells you that the ABS system is working. Use a firm steady pressure on the brake pedal.

What's your score?

- If you have five correct answers, you have an excellent knowledge of brakes. Congratulations!

- If you scored four correct answers, you have a very good understanding of brakes. You should be proud of your knowledge.

- If you have three correct answers, you have a passing knowledge. Be careful, or seek professional guidance.

- If you scored less than three correct answers, brush up on your car care tips, or be sure to have your vehicle properly and regularly maintained by a trained automotive service technician.

For more information, contact Denise Faguy, Car Care Council, manager, Communication Services, at (519) 766-9893.

### Buying Car Insurance Isn't An Option ... Choosing your deductible is

Did you know your car insurance deductibles increased when the Ontario government introduced its new auto legislation? What you may not know is that **Co-operators clients can choose to lower their deductible** by opting to pay an additional premium. Not all insurance companies offer this option. Call us today to see if you qualify.



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