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Youth neglecting their vehicles

What happens when your kids grow out of the backseat and into the driver's seat? Who's looking after their vehicles? Results from consumer research recently conducted clearly shows today's youth are neglecting their vehicles. This poses a safety threat to themselves, as well as others on the road.

We are facing a generation gap when it comes to vehicle maintenance. Today's driving youth (18-24 years) don't know what their cars need and are not taking care of their vehicles. Youth are less likely to change their oil every 5,000 km than more experienced drivers. Many young people (22%) had no idea when to change it at all or wait until the oil light comes on. Only 45% of youth bring their vehicle in for maintenance at least once a year versus 76% of people over 50. 22% never bring it in or only when it breaks down and 34% wait for a warning light or a strange noise. 10% of young drivers reported that they never put air in their tires and an additional 9% admitted they do not know how to determine the correct tire pressure.

These results identify an urgent need to educate today's young drivers about the need for regular vehicle maintenance. "Automotive preventive maintenance and repair knowledge is like algebra", explains Kelly Williams, spokesperson for Car Care Canada. "We're not born knowing it, it has to be learned. It is important that we teach young drivers the basics about their cars before they get the keys."

If you don't know much about automotive maintenance and repair, do yourself a favour and learn it along with your kids. Here are a few tips:

- Explain that all cars, new and old, need regular attention. Make sure your teenager knows and follows the maintenance sched-

ule for his/her car. In addition to making a car safe to drive, preventive maintenance can save thousands of dollars during a lifetime of driving.

- Don't overlook the owner's manual. This is full of information about the car that your young driver may never know unless he/she is familiar with this automotive bible.

- Make it fun. There are myriad sites on the Internet that are fascinating for young and old drivers, alike. Some have Q & A sections. Let your teen send his/her tough questions to the professionals. CarCareCanada.ca has a lot of consumer friendly information to get them started.

- It's probably been a while since they went on a field trip. Take them with you to the repair facility, the tire store, the body shop and wherever you have automotive work performed. Get them accustomed to the automotive world— its people, places, jargon and prices.

- There are hundreds of books available on this subject. Many are written specifically for non-technical audiences; some are even humorous. Buy a few and make them required reading for the licensing process.

- Make a plan. What happens if the car breaks down, he/she has a wreck, or the car gets stolen? Give them some instruction and put important phone numbers in the glove compartment.

For many parents, driving age is the final frontier. Certainly it is an important rite of passage for teenagers. Don't let your child pass into this stage of his/her life without being prepared. Take the time and the necessary materials to make your young driver feel competent and secure.

For more information about vehicle maintenance visit www.carcarecanada.ca.

—Article provided by Car Care Canada

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