accident prevention

Nearly half all traffic fatalities are at night

Tips for safer night driving

According to the 1986 Ontario accident statistics, 46 per cent of all traffic fatalities occur during hours of darkness — even though the number of miles driven at night is significantly lower than during the day. The Canadian Automobile Association suggests some tips

TIP #1: Look as far ahead as you can. If you can see an object that might present a hazard, assume that it will, and slow down until you are absolutely certain it is not a hazard. Keep your windshield clean. A windshield that is dirty inside or outside causes glare, decreasing visibility. Windshield wipers that leave streaks or chatter across the windshield also decrease visibility and should be replaced. Clean properly aligned headlights are also very important for identifying hazards.

TIP #2: Avoid over-driving your headlights. When an object becomes illuminated by your headlights, you should be driving slow enough to stop your car safely without hitting it.

TIP #3: Make sure other drivers can see you. Keep your tail-lights, turn signals, and brake lights clean and in good working order. It only takes a moment to walk around the car to check these systems. Have someone sit inside the car to operate the lights, brakes and turn signals. Or it's easy to check yourself in an enclosed area. Use your high beams, but don't forget to dim them for on-coming traffic or cars in front of you.

TIP #4: If a driver coming toward you is using high beams, flash your lights quickly with the dimmer switch. If the driver fails to dim the lights, look toward the right side of your lane. This will keep you from being blinded by the other car's headlights. You should be able to stay on course until the car passes.

TIP #5: Don't drive tired. Fatigue diminishes responsiveness needed for safe night driving. If you absolutely have to drive tired, pull off the road, where it is safe to do so, and rest several times during your trip. Remember, it's better to arrive late and safe than

not at all. Many of these safe-driving tips apply during daylight hours as well. Also remember to buckle up, and insist that your passengers buckle up too.

Use the right oil and car will last

When automobiles first appeared almost 100 years ago, straight mineral oil was good enough for engine lubrication. But because this type of motor oil contained no additives, it had to changed frequently, every 25 kilometers if you drove the 1905 Pierce Motorette.

Over the years engine design has improved dramatcally and improvements in motor oil performance have kept pace. Today's standard for engine lubrication and protection is 5W-30, which is recommended by automakers for most new cars and trucks because its viscosity gives it such excellent performance in a wide range of conditions, especially cold Canadian winters. An SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) approved 5W-30 oil provides the best combination of wear protection, fuel economy, cold-start performance and warm-up lubrication.

More than 70 per cent of engine wear occurs at start-up because of poor lubrication. A 5W-30 oil flows faster at start-up, lubricating moving parts and reducing damaging friction quicker than most other engine oils. Quicker, surer starts also reduce wear and tear on your battery and starter motor. In very cold temperatures, a 5W-30 oil will enable you to start your vehicle when that otherwise might not be possible.

It's best to use a 5W-30 oil when the engine is new. The thing to remember is to use the right oil for the best performance and longer life of your engine. For most new cars today, that oil is 5W-30.

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Reeping exterior clean Course frish an your arr or truck provides beauty depth

The paint finish on your car or truck provides beauty, depth of color, gloss retention and durability. It also helps increase the resale value of your vehicle.

The best way to preserve your vehicle's exterior finish is to keep it clean with frequent washings in cold or lukewarm water, according to General Motors. The GM specialists caution against washing a vehicle's exterior with hot water or in the direct rays of the sun. Strong soap or chemical detergents should not be used. All cleaning materials should be flushed promptly from the vehicle surface and not allowed to dry.

Periodic polishing and waxing is also recommended to remove surface residue from the paint finish. Consult your Owner's Manual for recommended polishes or waxes.

Bright metal parts should be cleaned regularly to keep their lustre. Washing with water is usually all that's needed. However, specially formulated chrome polish can be used on stainless steel or chrome trim if necessary. A coating of wax, rubbed to a high polish, is recommended for all bright metal parts.

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