

Safety first

Willie Wilfling is working on a truck at Alex's Service Center. Willie has been a mechanic for 25 years. He and Dan Dohmer explained how to prepare for winter driving.

Car maintenance saves lives

Many motorists, down automobile, look at the problem as an inconvenience. But it also Bates, chief of the Midland Police Department, points out.

So Dan Dohmer and Willie Wilfling of Alex's Service Center offered some tips for avoiding car

breakdown. Brakes are the number

one priority for Dohmer. "If the engine cuts out on you, you can coast to a stop," he noted. "But if the brakes let go, it's very hard to bring a car to a stop."

stranded by a broken get brakelines checked. When they get rusty, they can leak, causing the loss of brake fluid and the can be a hazard, Ernest brakes can give out completely, he warned.

Tire tread should be checked, especially in the winter, Dohmer advised. But don't rely on tread to help you on ice, he cautioned: "Snow tires don't help on ice."

Dohmer and Wilfling explained. stressed the importance of visibility.

"Make sure your rear defroster works," said Wilfling.

The front end parts steering linkage and tie

control because "if they because a small hole happen to pop out, you'd could lead to carbon have no steering," monoxide poisoning Dohmer noted.

hoses. If the power steer- engine.

battery, causing it to go you." dead very quickly, they

drain all your anti-freeze. If you don't catch it in time, the engine will sieze Week
up," Dohmer said. up," Dohmer said.

A couple of year-round

He advised drivers to rod ends - are vital to Check the exhaust system from fumes that get into Both men pointed out the car. And never open the vital role of belts and the radiator cap on a hot

ing belt breaks, steering "If you're experiencing gets very stiff, they said. heating problems, don't If the alternator belt go near the rad cap," he goes, the car runs off the said. "It can blow up on

ead very quickly, they xplained. "If the hoses go, it can Safety

The Great Canadian cautions from Dohmer: Challenge is the theme of this year's National Safe Driving Week sponsored by the Canada Safety Council.

Each year more than 4,000 Canadians die in traffic-related accidents, the council reports. Combined traffic fatalities and injuries number more 254,000 annually in Canada, it says, and property damage collisions are over 750,000.

Winter weather menace

Chief Ernest Bates of the Midland Police Department reminds drivers that the police have been running the Reduce Impaired Drivers Everywhere (RIDE) program approximately three days a week.

"We're going to put more hours on the RIDE program between now and Christmas," he said.

Many people are starting to celebrate Christmas parties at work, he noted. His advice is leave the car and take a cab or appoint a designated driver.

Drinking and driving don't mix any time he added, but it's even more important during the holiday season.

Midland OPP Constable Hannon said the Ontario Provincial Police have a RIDE program which moves around Simcoe County and the district of Muskoka.

"Every day they're going to be in a different spot," he said.

Everything about winter driving is different - your car, the roads, other drivers, visibility. Your attitude should be different too, warns the Canada Safety Council. Bates confirmed this

view.

"Our weather changes can be at the spur of the moment," he said. "You can park your car in good weather but come out and there's snow or freezing rain. Your driving habits have to change with the weather and road conditions."

Bates warned against jumping in the car after an overnight frost or snow without first cleaning the windows.

"Not just a hole in the front window," he said. He points out that you need to be able to see through the back and sides as well.

Bates also suggests motorists should prepare their vehicles for winter driving because a stranded car is a road hazard.

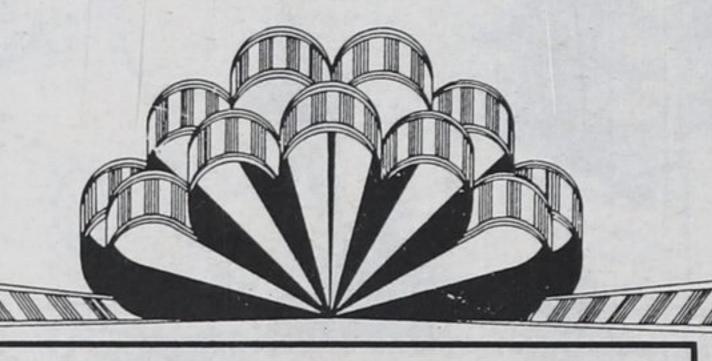


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