

June

Wheels

Drive carefully – most accidents occur in July and August

With the summer vacation season upon us, the Canada Safety Council reminds Canadians to drive carefully.

Motor vehicle injuries and fatalities peak during July and August – yet most are entirely preventable by safe driving and proper vehicle care.

Vehicle Check

Before leaving, check the spare tire. Carry a flashlight, flares, first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and tow chain or strap where they can be reached easily in case of an emergency. Don't forget sunglasses, road map, notebook and pencil or pen.

Loaded Vehicle

Leave plenty of distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you when you are driving a heavily-loaded car or towing a trailer.

Keeping your distance is one of the most important factors in safe driving. You should have at least one second for each three metres (10 feet) of vehicle length. A car six metres (20 feet) should have at least four seconds following distance.

If conditions are unfavourable, increase the distance. When cars pull out in front of you, drop back to keep your interval.

When towing a trailer, be sure the rear vision mirrors give

clear view of the road behind.

When traveling more slowly than the rest of the traffic, be courteous – pull over where possible and let faster vehicles pass.

Using a small car to tow a heavy trailer can result in major mechanical problems such as overheated engines, transmission, brakes and steering failure. Be sure your vehicle is equipped to pull that heavy trailer.

Long Trips

Fatigue is a major cause of highway collisions, which is why regular rest stops are important. Most collisions occur between 6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Weather Conditions

Wet or slippery roads or poor visibility are good reasons to delay your departure.

If you should meet these conditions en route, slow down and proceed with extreme caution.

Know the weather trends at your destination. Crashes on highways can be more severe than on ordinary roads because of higher speeds.

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Keep trailer in tip-top shape

also prone to blowing. It's best to know the weight of your trailer and boat and plan accordingly when purchasing tires.

Note: Tire gauges are relatively cheap and can help extend the life of your tires.

Most car spares are now radials, and if you get a flat on your trailer and want to use the spare from your towing vehicle, you could be prone to swaying, even if your towing vehicle and trailer use the same size tire.

The options? Use the exact same tires on your trailer as on your towing vehicle, or buy and dedicate a spare tire solely to your trailer.

Electrical System

It is important to check your electrical system and wires for corrosion on a regular basis and replace as necessary.

A water-inhibiting grease will help protect water-exposed wires and electrical tape will add another layer of protection to exposed wires.

Brakes

The brakes on your trailer should be adjusted at 1,500 kilometres and every 3,000 kilometres thereafter.

Most trailers will come with an owner's manual that will tell you how to adjust the brakes on your trailer.

Brake fluid should be checked regularly and can be done by removing the cap on top of the actuator housing, making sure the fluid level isn't more than a centimeter (one-half inch) below the top.

Again, your owner's manual will give you more detailed information.

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