

April

Wheels

It is possible to drive a car and be environmentally friendly

For most Canadians, driving a vehicle has become a necessity. Still, many Canadians are concerned about the environmental affects this can have. Many wonder how can we teach our children to value the environment and still depend on our vehicle?

The answer is through regular vehicle maintenance, or car care, said Car Care Canada.

Properly maintaining your vehicle is a win-win situation. Besides helping the environment, a properly maintained and operated vehicle runs more efficiently and economically, is safer, and should last up to 50 per cent longer. The following tips can put you on the road to environmentally conscious car care.

Keep your engine tuned-up - a misfiring spark plug can reduce fuel efficiency by as much as 30 per cent. Follow the service schedules listed in the owner's manual. Replace filters and fluids as recommended. You'll help cut down on air pollution too.

Check tires for proper inflation. Under-inflated tires waste fuel because the engine has to work harder. Similarly, wheels that are not properly aligned (as evidenced by the uneven tire tread of vehicle pulling) also rob energy.

And, properly maintained tires last longer, meaning fewer scrap tires have to be disposed of.

Do-it-yourselfers should dispose of used motor oil, anti-

freeze/coolant, tires and old batteries properly.

Many repair facilities accept these items, and many of these items are now recycled.

Call your local government for recycling sites. Never dump used oil or anti-freeze on the ground, in your local sewage system, or in streams.

If you are not a do-it-yourselfer, find a good automotive technician.

Ask friends and associates for recommendations. Check the shop's reputation with your local consumer group.

Keep your air conditioner in top condition and have it serviced only by a n auto



service technician certified competent to handle/recycle refrigerants.

Air conditioners contain CFCs and other gases that have been implicated in the depletion of the ozone layer. These gases can escape during improper service and repair, so it is important to choose a qualified technician.

Good driving habits are also important. You can get the most out of your vehicle while minimizing environmental damage. Here are some fuel saving tips:

⚡ Observe speed limits. Fuel consumption rises sharply with high speeds.

⚡ Drive gently. Avoid sudden accelerations and jerky stop-and-go actions. Use cruise control on open highways to keep speed as steady as possible.

⚡ Avoid excessive idling. Shut off the engine while waiting for friends or family. Today's vehicles are designed to warm-up fast, so forget about those five-minute warm-ups on chilly spring or fall mornings. One minute should be enough.

⚡ Remove excess items from the vehicle. Less weight means better mileage.

⚡ Plan trips. Consolidate daily errands to eliminate unnecessary driving. Try to travel when traffic is light to avoid stop-and-go conditions. Join a car pool.

⚡ Remember, how your car runs, how you drive it and how its fluids, old parts and tires are disposed of affects your vehicle, your maintenance costs and the environment.

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