

WHEELS

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Surveys show women enjoy the safety and security of a well-maintained vehicle, but dislike their limited knowledge

More than 40 per cent of women who plan to purchase a vehicle are likely to be shopping for a new car, said a 1998 report prepared for the Royal Bank by DesRosiers Automotive Consultants.

That means that close to 60 per cent of women in the market for a car will be buying a used vehicle. The same Royal Bank report also indicates that those motorists who own a used vehicle plan to have it for 6.8 years.

More and more households are run by single women, so women are responsible for vehicle maintenance in a growing number of households and families.

Even if there is a male partner in the household, many women are still responsible for their vehicle's maintenance.

Historically, women have reported that they felt they were treated differently than their male counterparts by repair facilities.

Attitudes in repair facilities are finally changing. More and more repair facilities recognize that a large part of their customer base is female and that those customers should be treated with respect just like any other customer.

Surveys show that women enjoy the safety and security of having a well-maintained vehicle, but dislike having limited knowl-

edge. How can women learn more about their vehicles, practice good safety measures, and even save money?

First, Car Care Canada recommends to female motorists that they practice proper overall vehicle maintenance. A properly maintained vehicle is less likely to break down and costs less money to maintain in the long run.

The average annual cost for vehicle repair in Canada is around \$777, so you should budget accordingly. Of course, the older the car, the more

the annual cost for maintenance is likely to increase.

Second, Car Care Canada has developed an easy-to-understand booklet about vehicles called Car Maintenance Made Easy.

It covers the basic parts of a car and what they do. To order your copy, write Car Care Canada, 1272 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 3A7.

Third, Car Care Canada also recommends ensuring that all the safety features on your car are properly maintained and in proper working order.

One area to focus on is the Safety Triangle, three parts of a vehicle — brakes, tires, and shocks — that work all together.

If any one of these key components is not in top working condition, stopping distances can increase dramatically and driver control can be seriously diminished. There is a strong relationship between shocks, brakes, and tires, and Car Care Canada believes it is vital to ensure proper maintenance of each point in this safety triangle.

STRAIGHTFORWARD SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

Women may want to remember a few other key safety points.

If your vehicle does break down, you should pull as far off the road as you can, and put your hazard lights on.

Purchase an emergency kit that includes a sign that says Call Police.

Inexpensive items that are vital to safety include:

Wiper blades — we all take them for granted, but wiper blades keep the front, and in some cases back windshield, clear of rain and dirt, so you can see where you are going.

And seeing where you are going, and what is happening ahead and behind you, is one of the keys to safe driving.

Headlights — darkness at night causes you to have a reduced field of vision, considerably reduced contrast detection and difficulty in recognizing colour.

A brighter and wider illumination of the road leads to safer driving. A vehicle's headlights, including high beams, play a significant role in keeping your field of vision as large as possible.

In essence, the lighting provided by headlights allows for greater safety by making road-side hazards more visible. Headlights aren't considered costly, the average cost for a headlight bulb is \$10.

Signal lights (including brake lights and turn signals) — if other drivers can anticipate your next move because they see your vehicle's brake lights and/or a turn signal, then they can react appropriately and you can help to avoid any accidents.

The last safety reminder is for everyone to ensure they have a properly equipped first aid or emergency kit in their vehicle.

ATTITUDES IN REPAIR FACILITIES ARE FINALLY CHANGING. MORE AND MORE REPAIR FACILITIES RECOGNIZE THAT A LARGE PART OF THEIR CUSTOMER BASE IS FEMALE AND THAT THOSE CUSTOMERS SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER CUSTOMER.



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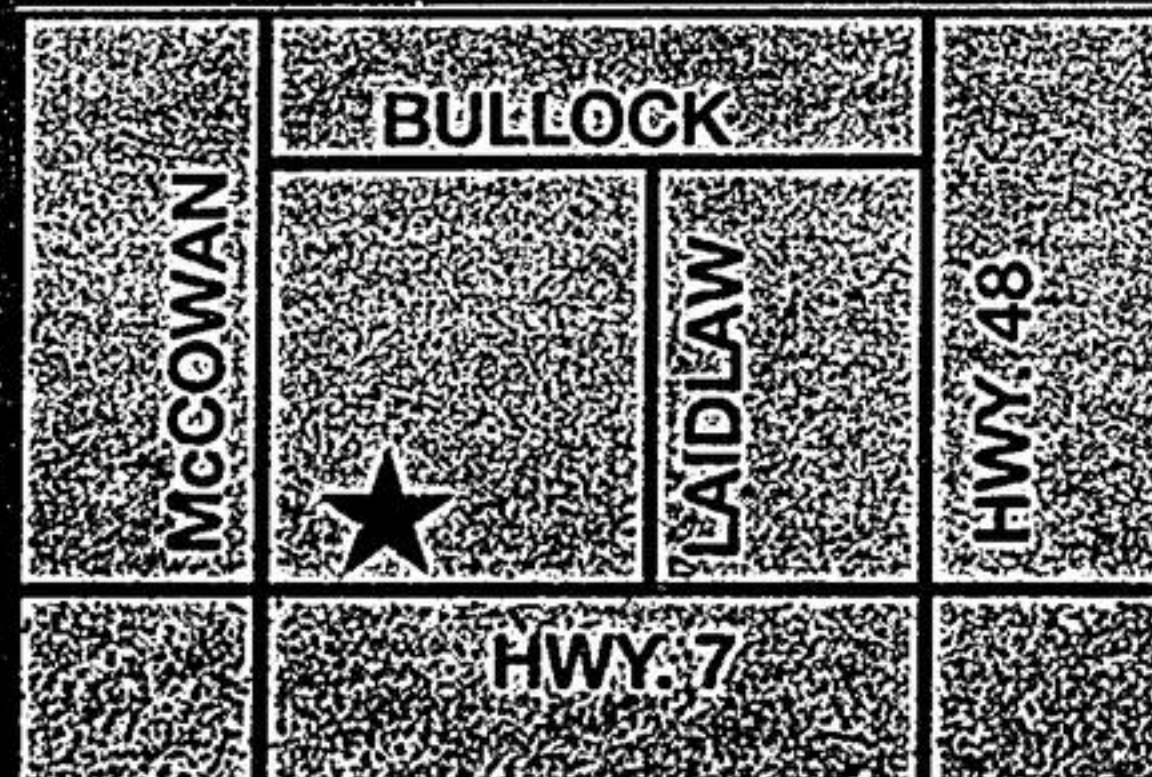
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