



## Drive Smart: Tips For Safe Summer Driving

Summers are packed with excitement - barbecues, vacations and endless fun in the sun. Despite our best intentions, scheduling these activities between work, family, and daily commitments leaves us feeling rushed, distracted and often irritable. When out on the road this summer, it's important to push those stressful thoughts aside and focus on one task - safely reaching our destination.

As drivers, we must concentrate on the basics: buckle up, pay attention and be responsible behind the wheel.

Stay safe on the road. Keep the following recommendations in mind:

- Don't start your engine without correctly securing each passenger in the vehicle, including children and pets. Lock all doors.
- Be a safe and courteous driver. Follow the rules of the road and always stay aware of what's going on around you.
- Avoid potential distraction:
  - Don't reach behind you, pick things up off the floor, open the glove compartment, clean the inside windows, or perform personal grooming while driving.
  - Don't talk on your cell phone while driving. Wait until you get to your destination, or pull over to the side of the road before beginning a cell phone conversation.
  - Don't drive if you're tired. Share driving duties with another driver when on a long trip. Take frequent breaks, at least every two hours.
  - Avoid slowing down to "gawk" at a crash or other roadside activity.
- Don't drink and drive. If you plan to drink, designate a driver who won't drink.
- Don't ruin your trip with aggressive behavior. Reduce your stress on the road:
  - Allow plenty of time to get where you're going. Consider changing your schedule to avoid the worst congestion.
  - Avoid conflict and don't be pushed into a confrontation.
  - Refresh your defensive driving skills.
- Be aware of special night driving hazards, including compromised vision and fatigue. During evening hours, reduce your speed, increase your following distances, and avoid long drives and unfamiliar roads.
- Always let a family member or friend know your route, travel plans and your scheduled time of arrival.

Keep your car in good working order:

- Maintain proper levels for all fluids - antifreeze, oil, windshield wipers, transmission, power steering, battery and brake.
- Make sure all tires are in good condition, are properly inflated, and rotated regularly.
- Check regularly for cracked hoses, belts and frayed wires.
- Schedule all routine maintenance (see Owner's Manual for requirements).
- Make sure windows, mirrors, directional signals, and head, tail, and brake lights are clean and not broken.
- Replace and test windshield wipers regularly.
- Keep your gas tank half full (with the correct gasoline) at all times.



Some helpful resources:

National Safety Council Driver Safety topic page, <http://www.nsc.org/issues/drivsafe.htm>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

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