



Summer Driving

While it may seem like hazardous driving conditions are limited to winter, that is not necessarily true, as warm weather driving brings its own challenges.

Planning

Success of any vehicle trip is dependent on a few basic principles. For a problem-free trip regardless of the time of year, there are a few planning best practices to take in order to avoid costly breakdowns:

- Plan the route, especially if it is a new or unfamiliar one. Do not just plug in the GPS and go; consider having current maps as a backup. Research the route to be familiar with rest areas and overnight stops to prevent surprises and provide driver and cargo safety. Many states have websites listing summer road construction projects and whether or not there are anticipated delays
- Check the levels of all the fluids including the radiator, air conditioner, oil, and washer fluid
- Inspect batteries, fuel, and air system filters for possible replacement
- Complete any engine maintenance if due
- Inspect the brakes and braking system
- Check the tire pressure and wear, including the spare tire. Have a tire-changing tool kit and roadside emergency kit available
- Perform a walk around inspection to make sure windows are clean and wipers work. Verify that all the lights and turn signals are also in working order

Think **safety first** when preparing for a road trip.

Be aware of additional challenges that can be encountered, presenting a **need for increased awareness and defensive driving.**

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On the Road

Once on the road, be aware of additional challenges that can be encountered, presenting a need for increased awareness and defensive driving:

- Rain storms that can obscure the driver's vision and increase the chances of hydroplaning
- Potholes and road damage that are dangerous to vehicles and drivers especially at high speeds
- Road construction, causing delays and increasing the possibility of incidents to construction workers or with impatient or distracted motorists
- Vehicles overheating due to increased air temperatures, use of air-conditioning, hauling of loads, and poor vehicle maintenance
- Inexperienced, drowsy, distracted, or impaired drivers are always a concern. However, teen-driver crashes and fatalities are highest during the summer months due to the increased opportunity to drive on unknown roads and/or unfamiliar conditions
- Increased wildlife activity around roadways. In some areas wild land fires can result in delays or rerouting of traffic
- Increased use of roadways by motorcyclists, bicyclists, and agricultural equipment along with summer vacation travelers

Think safety first when preparing for a road trip. Buckle up, put the cell phone down, and follow the rules of the road. Be rested before starting out and be prepared with water and snacks in the vehicle. Avoid the temptation to drive straight through non-stop, even with switching drivers, as the consequences can be tragic.

While driving, practice the five key Decision Driving® principles of expanding your look ahead capacity, sizing up the whole scene, signaling your intentions early and often, planning an escape route, and taking decisive action. A few proactive steps will make the summer safer for yourself and all of those sharing the road with you.

Resources

Top 5 summer driving hazards, from <http://www.safefhighways.org>

Common sense safety tips for summer travel, from <http://www.ots.ca.gov>


Liberty Mutual Resources

Decision driving overview, RC 680

Decision driving passing tactics, RC 595

Employee travel safety, RC 5001

Mirror adjustment for light and medium trucks, RC 280



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Volume 8 Issue 3 ♦ July 2016