

OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 7, 2013

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2013 Vehicle Safety Checklist

Tips and Tricks to Remain Safe in the New Year

Sacramento- The start of a new year is an ideal time to change bad habits and adopt good ones. If timely maintenance and safety checks on your vehicle haven't been a priority in the past, the California Office of Traffic Safety encourages you to resolve to make some simple changes to your behavior that can help keep you and your loved ones safe and save you from costly repairs in the future.

The following checklist is designed to help you ensure that your vehicle is in prime working condition before hitting the road.

Check Your Tires

- Check your tire pressure monthly. The best way to avoid flats and blowouts is to monitor your tire pressure and meet your car manufacturer's recommendations for pressure levels. Most are posted on either the driver's door or door post.
- Inspect your tires. If your tread is worn down to 1/16 of an inch, your tires need to be replaced. Also look for uneven wear and tear; this may indicate you need a tire rotation or wheel alignment.
- Carrying a spare tire that is inflated to manufacturer pressure recommendations will help save you time and money if faced with a flat tire.

Belts and Hoses

- Inspect your engine's belts and hoses to make sure that they are in good working condition. Look for signs of blisters, cracks and cuts in the rubber and replace old and worn out hoses as necessary. Also, check all hose connections to make sure that they are secure and are not showing signs of leaks or tears.

Wiper Blades

- Inspect your wiper blades and replace them if they appear brittle, cracked, torn or smearing.

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Heating and Cooling Systems

- Check your coolant levels to make sure they meet manufacturer recommendations and make note if it is time for your system to be flushed and refilled.

Fluid Levels

- Check your oil levels often and keep up with regular oil services.
- Check all other fluid levels in your vehicle, including: power steering, transmission, brake, coolant, and wiper fluid. Make sure all reservoirs are filled and check for signs of leakage.

Lights

- By replacing old, broken, or burnt out light bulbs in your vehicle, you are allowing yourself to not only see, but to be seen by other drivers.
- Check all brake lights, headlights, turn indicators, emergency flashers, dome and interior lights and trailer lights, if applicable.

Safety and First Aid Kits

- Make sure you have both a first aid kit and a roadside safety kit for emergencies. The Office of Traffic Safety has suggestions for a safety kit at www.ots.ca.gov/roadsideemergencykit.asp

Documentation

- Always carry updated insurance and registration information.
- Keep emergency contact information readily available.

Taking the time to ensure your vehicle is in proper working condition now, can mean peace of mind for you later. For more traffic safety information, log on to www.ots.ca.gov. You can also join on us on Twitter at: http://twitter.com/#!/OTS_CA or "like" us at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS

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