

Sergeant Bob's Summer Safety Tips

Retired Police Sergeant Bob Paterson works with The McLennan Group Insurance Inc. to develop practical safety tips for CARP members.

"Don't gamble with your safety. The stakes are too high."



Safe Summer Driving

Ensuring the safety of the driver, the occupants and the vehicle itself is no accident.

Vehicle and Driver Fitness

- Ensure you are correctly licensed and properly trained for the class of vehicle / vessel you'll be operating.
- Think again before trying out a friend's new machine. Reconsider if it's been a while since you've operated a boat, ATV, motorcycle, tractor, etc.
- Be sober when operating vehicles, vessels or aircraft on land, water, or in the air.
- Is the trailer, truck bed or roof top cargo load secure? Roads are littered with furniture, building materials and parcels each summer and the offending driver is responsible. Pack and secure carefully or arrange professional delivery because insecure cargo is deadly, especially for motorcyclists.

Summer Trailer Towing

- If towing is planned, the trailer must be compatible with the tow vehicle and in good repair. Common problem areas and related tips:
 - Trailer wheel bearings, tires, lighting and connections, plus trailer brakes.
 - Corrosion and metal fatigue on a trailer that should have been retired.
 - Insecure or wrong classification of hitch and secondary connections.
- Remember to cross the secondary connection chains (or cables) directly under the hitch, this will provide a "cradle" for a suddenly disconnected trailer tongue and limit side to side sway.
- Regardless of what's being towed get professional advice when selecting a tow vehicle, trailer and accessories. Deal with reputable suppliers and installers and when in doubt step up in terms of "weight class" rather than overloading critical components.
- Be aware that the combined weight of tow vehicle and trailer / cargo may move the vehicles into an entirely different legal classification. Provincial regulations regarding inspections and licensing must be researched.
- Securing the load safely to the trailer is as critical as the trailer connection itself, don't scrimp on fasteners and hardware. "Bungee" cords are not enough; heavy webbing and appropriate straps are required.

- Carry proof of ownership for your trailer and make insurance coverage arrangements for the trailer, tow vehicle and expensive cargo.
- A correct rear licence plate must attached to the rear of the trailer, clearly visible and illuminated after dusk.
- A "pre-trip" practice session that includes turning and reversing is recommended for new trailer owners and when new equipment is being used. Tow vehicle mirrors may also require adjustment or replacement.
- Boat trailers require additional care. An experienced operator or marina staff can provide tips in terms equipment, technique and safety. Even partially submerged components on the trailer and tow vehicle such as bearings, lighting, lubricants, axles, etc. require increased maintenance.

Automobile Safety

- A preliminary maintenance and repair check list for safe summer travel should include brakes, tires, suspension, lighting and controls, windshield wipers and fluids.
- Engine and power train fitness can also help you avoid roadside breakdowns and out of town repairs, not to mention fuel savings and environmental considerations.
- Scrimping or delaying inevitable repairs can be costly and risky in terms of traffic safety and personal security.
- Correct seat belt use and child care seat / booster installation is not only critical, it's the law. Consult your vehicle owner's manual and the child seat manual before heading out this summer and make sure anyone else transporting your children is aware and also compliant. A good source of additional information regarding proper seat belt use is your local St. John Ambulance, public health department or police services.



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