

# Safety Fact Sheet



These programs offered by the Utah Safety Council offer practical strategies to reduce collision related injuries and fatalities on Utah roadways.

## DRIVING SAFELY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

Summer brings warm temperatures, which means more people traveling on the roads. Here are some tips to keep you safe and your car running properly.

### TIRE CARE

Tire care, while important throughout the year, is especially critical in warm weather because long trips, heavy loads, high speeds and higher temperatures all put additional stress on your tires.

- **Check your tires regularly** to be sure there are no visible signs of wear or damage.
- **Be sure your tires are properly inflated.** Check your tire pressure often with a gauge, especially on long trips. Measure when the tires are cold, before you drive on them. You can find the recommended inflation pressure in your owner's manual, on a label frequently found in the glove box, near the door latch on the driver's side, or other locations on your vehicle. The recommended inflation pressure is not to be confused with the maximum inflation pressure shown on the side of the tire. At the recommended inflation pressure, tires will last longer and be less likely to fail, and the car will use less fuel. Serious injury can result from tire failure because of under inflation or overloading.
- **Never overload your vehicle.** Your car and tires are designed to operate safely only up to their load limits. These limits are shown in your owner's manual and on the certification plate on the edge of the driver's door.
- **Make sure there is enough tread on the tire** to operate safely, and make sure the tires are wearing normally. All grooves should be visible and deep enough to at least touch the top of Lincoln's head on a penny inserted head first in the tread. Low tread or bald tires are unsafe and need to be replaced.
- **If some spots on the tire seem to be wearing faster than others, see your service station or mechanic.** You could have misaligned wheels, worn shock absorbers, or other potential problems. Make sure your tires are aligned and balanced properly.
- **Don't drive at a high rate of speed for a long time, particularly in hot weather.** Obey posted speed limits. Lower speeds also mean better gas mileage.

### OVERHEATING

A common cause of breakdowns is overheating, especially during summertime. Your cooling system should be completely flushed and refilled as recommended in your owner's manual. The level, condition, and concentration of the coolant should be checked periodically. (A 50/50 mix of anti-freeze and water is usually recommended.)

If your car overheats — or if you are doing regular maintenance at home — never remove the radiator cap until the engine has thoroughly cooled.

A professional should check the tightness and condition of drive belts, clamps, and hoses.



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## AIR QUALITY

Several areas in Northern Utah have been ranked as having the worst air quality in the Nation. Summer sunshine, heat and car exhaust create a toxic cocktail -- ozone pollution. Ozone can cause respiratory problems and even permanent lung damage. According to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, over 50% of Utah's air pollution comes from motor vehicles. These emissions add potentially harmful pollutants into the air, and lead to a handful of days every year that are classified as "unhealthy" in Salt Lake City and other parts of Utah.

Here are some steps you can take to cut down on pollution when you drive:

- Drive less, especially during peak traffic periods or hot days.
- Avoid revving or idling engine over 30 seconds.
- Fill gas tank during cooler evening hours to cut down on evaporation.
- Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned.

*Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Citizen Information Center, Washington State SAFE KIDS Coalition, SLC Government, KSL*