

Spring Cleaning For The Vehicle And The Driver

*Acknowledgements: The National Institute For Automotive Service Excellence
The Rubber Manufacturers Association
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
The National Safety Council*

This is normally a good time of year to de-clutter and clean up whatever is messy in your life. Perhaps this concept could also be applied to your vehicle and your driving habits. Consider the following helpful tips in this regard.

Spring Cleaning For The Vehicle

- *Choose to do business only with a qualified mechanic* - Cars are now highly computerized and should be only repaired by properly trained technicians. Mechanics certified by the *National Institute For Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)* have obtained a higher standard of ability in diagnosing and safely repairing your automobile.
- *Pay regular attention to your tires* – According to the *Rubber Manufacturers Association*, under inflation is the number one cause of tire failure. Check your tire pressure at least once per month and don't forget about your spare tire.
- *Give yourself a brake* – Have your brakes inspected at least once yearly. Pay close attention to any squeaky or grinding noises, as well as any spongy or mushy brake pedal conditions.
- *Shed some light on the subject* – The plastic headlight coverings on modern vehicles can fade over time, causing the headlight to be artificially dim. If your vehicle has this problem, have the coverings replaced immediately.
- *A breath of fresh air* – Most modern vehicles have sophisticated filters on their air conditioning system that trap dirt, pollen, and allergens. Replace these filters according to your vehicle's manufacturer instructions.

Spring Cleaning For The Driver

- Remember to buckle up your seatbelt before EVERY trip.
- If you must use the cell phone, pull off the road first or utilize a hands-free cell phone
- Maintain at least a 2-second following distance at all times
- Do not drink and drive – even one alcoholic beverage can impair your abilities
- Be extra careful around pedestrian crosswalks – especially during class change times
- Pay special attention in parking lots – look for children and other obstacles
- Take caution when backing your vehicle – if necessary, get out and look around before continuing in reverse.
- Stay alert and focused while driving – scan well ahead for potential hazards
- Check your rear and side view mirrors regularly.
- Recognize your vehicle's blind spots – learn how to change lanes and backup your vehicle safely in spite of these blind spots.

For more information, see:

The National Institute For Automotive Service Excellence, www.asecert.org
The Rubber Manufacturers Association, www.rma.org
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, www.nhtsa.dot.gov
The National Safety Council, www.nsc.org/library/facts/defdriv.htm