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## Take the scare out of driving on Halloween

Driving on Halloween can be frightening for motorists, especially when little "ghouls" and "goblins" – out after dark and full of excitement – forget road safety rules or wear costumes or masks that limit their vision. To help ensure safety on a night reserved for fun, the Car Care Council reminds motorists to drive slowly, be extra careful when entering or exiting driveways or alleyways, and make sure the vehicle's brake system works properly.

The vehicle's brake system is its most critical safety item, but brakes wear out and eventually need replacement. The factors that affect brake wear are driving habits, operating conditions, vehicle type, and the quality of the brake lining material. Symptoms of brake problems include the following:

- The car pulls to one side during braking;
- The brake pedal pulsates when the brakes are applied;
- The brake pedal feels "mushy";
- There is a noise when stepping on the brake pedal; and
- There is a repeated need to add brake fluid to the master cylinder.

Drivers should also check their windshield wipers and windshield fluid, as well as the vehicle's lights, for maximum performance and visibility on Halloween.

Parents and adults should remind their trick-or-treaters to get out of cars on the curb side and not the traffic side, to stop at all corners, and to use crosswalks. Children should look left, right, and left again before crossing, stay on sidewalks, avoid crossing through yards and wear bright, reflective, and flame retardant clothing.

(Source: Car Care Council)

## Winter Car Care



## Time to replace your vehicle's cabin air filter?

If you get headaches, suffer allergic reactions, or have breathing problems, it's probably time to change the cabin air filter in your vehicle. Cabin air filters clean the incoming air and remove allergens and should be replaced every 12,000 to 15,000 miles, or per the owner's manual, according to the Car Care Council.

More than 80 percent of new domestic and import vehicles sold in the U.S. today come equipped with cabin air filtration systems or a slot where one can be installed.

"Many people don't even know they have a cabin air filter in their vehicle, and most others aren't aware of the health benefits of maintaining their vehicle's cabin air filter," said Rich White, executive director of the Car Care Council. "It's a simple preventative maintenance step that goes a long way toward protecting passengers, as well as the vehicle's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system."

The cabin air filter helps trap pollen, bacteria, dust, and exhaust gases that may find their way into a vehicle's air conditioning and heating and ventilation systems. The filter also prevents leaves, bugs, and

other debris from entering the HVAC system.

A dirty or clogged cabin air filter can cause musty odors in the vehicle and cause contaminants to become so concentrated in the cabin that passengers actually breathe in more fumes and particles when riding in the car compared to walking down the street.

A restricted cabin air filter can also impair airflow in the HVAC system, possibly causing interior heating and cooling problems. Over time, the heater and air conditioner may also become damaged by corrosion.

Most filters are accessible through an access panel in the HVAC housing, which may be under the hood or in the interior of the car. An automotive service technician can help locate the cabin filter and replace it, according to the vehicle's owner manual. Some filters require basic hand tools to remove and install the replacement filter; others just require your hands.

Filters should not be cleaned and reinstalled; instead, they should be replaced.

(Source: Car Care Council)

## Take precautions to avoid deer this fall

Deer-vehicle crashes are most likely to occur during the autumn months, the peak time for deer herd movement, according to the Minnesota departments of Public Safety and Natural Resources.

During 2004-2006 in Minnesota, 13,214 deer-vehicle crashes resulted in 13 deaths and 1,449 injuries.

White-tailed deer increase their daily movements during the fall mating season, which usually peaks in the first two weeks of November. Motorists should watch for deer during dawn and dusk – when most deer-vehicle crashes occur.

"The best safety advice is to belt up and don't 'veer for deer,'" said Cheri Marti, director of the Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety. "It's safer to hit a deer than to swerve into oncoming traffic or off the side of the road and risk hitting another vehicle or roadside object."

The DNR reports the state's deer herd is about 1.2 million. Officials say the deer-vehicle crash issue becomes more critical as traffic volume increases and development extends further into rural areas.

If motorists encounter a deer on the road, Marti said they should brake firmly and bring the vehicle to a controlled stop.

Drivers should follow this safety information:

- Buckle up: in case of a crash, a seat belt is the best defense; motorcyclists should wear helmets.
- Drive at safe speeds: the posted speed limit is the speed limit.
- Slow down and prepare to stop as soon as you see a deer. It is safer to stop than to take evasive action.
- If you see one deer, watch for more.
- If you hit a deer, call 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement agency.

(Sources: DNR and Department of Public Safety)

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