

### Vehicle maintenance and car-pooling go hand in hand

For many parents, car-pooling to school is the perfect blend of financial and environmental responsibility. But given that you will be toting around other people's loved ones as well as your own, the importance of a well-maintained, reliable vehicle is multiplied.

Here are some things you should do to prepare your car for its carpooling duties:

Check your fluids. Make it a habit to check your fluid levels once per month – particularly the level and condition of your antifreeze/coolant. It's not hard to "top off"; just use as recommended - Prestone's 50/50 prediluted LongLife antifreeze/coolant is for all makes and models. Your preventative maintenance could help you avoid an overheated engine.

Visit your trusted mechanic for a vehicle inspection. They can alert you to any potential problems, and fix those that are necessary.

Get an oil change. With carpooling schedules, the miles on your car will like-

ly increase. If you have an older car with many miles, consider using the Fram High Mileage oil filter. It has a special additive that continually helps reduce engine wear and maintain oil viscosity.

Be prepared. As the weather gets colder, make sure your vehicle is stocked with ice-fighting products like Prestone Deicer windshield washer fluid with dirt blocker. The night before a frost or snow, spray your windshield with Prestone Ice and Frost Shield vehicle glass treatment to reduce the need for scraping.

Play it safe. Always keep an emergency kit and cell phone in your car in case of emergencies. As the weather gets colder, have extra blankets and warm clothes on hand, along with bottled water and snacks. If needed, these items can help keep you and your passengers safe until help arrives.

More information on this topic can be found online at [www.honeywellcpg.com](http://www.honeywellcpg.com).

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### What happens when I skip vehicle maintenance?

We all know it's important to take care of our vehicles. Even with the best of intentions we go beyond the recommended change intervals, ignoring scheduled maintenance. And while you may not notice a change in vehicle performance or see any evidence of engine damage, that doesn't mean a potential problem isn't brewing.

Below are some key maintenance routines not to ignore. Remember, take your vehicle to a qualified service technician if you are unable to perform the work yourself, and for many situations where professional help may be called for:

**Suspension and brakes.** Squeaking brakes, a low pedal or a bounce in your ride all signal that it's time for some brake or suspension work. This is one area where it's absolutely critical you follow through and make an appointment at your local repair shop. It's not worth jeopardizing your safety.

**Oil changes.** Oil's job is to lubricate an engine and all of its parts – rods, bearings, pistons. Over time, and the longer you go between oil changes, the more depleted the oil becomes of important additives. Once depleted past a certain point, the oil loses its ability to lubricate your vehicle's engine. Using a quality oil filter will help protect your vehicle for the long haul.

**Antifreeze/Coolant.** Antifreeze/coolant performs three different functions – specifically, it prevents your cooling system from freezing in the winter, boiling in



Proper car maintenance goes along way for the survival of your vehicle.

the summer, as well as protecting it from rust and corrosion all year around. (The cooling system consists of many components made from different types of metallic and non-metallic materials, like the radiator, water pump, hoses, fan(s), heater, and thermostat – all kept running efficiently with engine coolant.) Cooling systems remove excess heat from the engine block and heads, keeping the engine operating at efficient temperatures. If the cooling system fails, multiple engine components can become damaged or fail too. Topping off your cooling system with a good quality coolant could mean the difference between approximately \$15 for the jug of antifreeze vs. \$1,000 or more for a blown head gasket if you are constantly running low.

**Spark plugs.** Research from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence shows a misfiring spark plug can reduce fuel efficiency as much as 30 percent. If you are looking to save money at the pump, changing old, worn or dirty spark plugs and keeping your engine tuned should be a priority.

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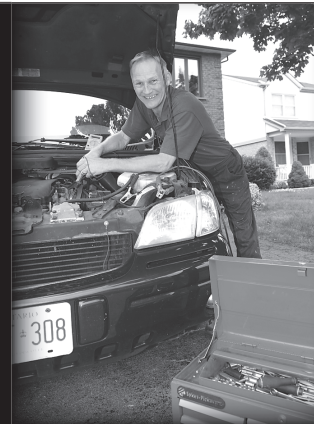
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