fall



OCTOBER 28, 2015



car

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE WINCHESTER PRESS

care











Rare pair, GM classic pick up trucks



Press Photos – Van Bridger

WINCHESTER

It is not uncommon to see either a unique looking two-tone 1957 Chevrolet or a rusty burnt orange 1956 GMC step-side pickup truck on the streets of Winchester.

Featured on our cover

Both are classic vehicles approaching 60 years of age and both are owned by village resident Ron Freeland, a full-time mechanic who spends most of his off time restoring, preserving, rebuilding, and to some extent customizing Chevy/GMC products.

His first automotive acquisition was a motorcycle when he was a teenager. He then moved up to a Harley-Davidson, which he personalized. Since those early days, he has concentrated on four-wheeled modes of transportation.

Freeland's 1957 Chevy Cameo is a truly rare truck. He purchased it from Dale Farris, a Chevrolet collector in Ottawa, who estimates he has bought and sold at least 35 1955 and 1957 Chevs in 30 years.

The Cameo was manufactured in the U.S. in the mid to late 1950s. There were only 2,740 turned out in 1957 and Freeland figures he has only ever seen one other such model in Ontario.

A sleek and rather unusual looking cargo box makes the Cameo stand out. Freeland's truck is powered by a 265 V8, which is connected to a four-speed HydraMatic (automatic) transmission. It rides on 15-inch, bias-ply Coke Classic tires.

1956 GMC

What makes Freeland's 1956 GMC stand out is its paint finish. Some would say it is rusted. But, most car lovers in the know would say it is patina. The weathered orange step side, sporting red wheel accents and wide white walls, may look rusted, but its finish is called a crude method to give a well-worn (rusted and faded) look to a factory paint job.

The patina finish has been described as a look of different areas of bodywork, or like making a silk purse into a sow's ear.

The '56 has a 265 V8, which Freeland topped with a four-BBL carburetor under its hood. The horsepower goes to the rear wheels through a three-speed standard transmission. It was originally a Saskatchewan farm truck Freeland purchased in Acton, Ont.

Freeland's other rolling stock is a 1957 Chevy V8 two-door that he drives on a regular basis.

He still has his Harley, but hasn't ridden it in years citing high insurance costs.

"It's just too costly to ride and I was sick of getting caught in the rain and getting wet," he said.

"But with these," he added, pointing to the trucks, "I drive for at least five months and if it rains you just turn on the wipers and drive on."

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Don't omit the 'kit'

No matter how many hockey bags you're trying to fit in your trunk you should never hit the road without an emergency kit, especially in the winter months.

The characteristic slippery roads, poor visibility and varied precipitation in winter can challenge even the most experienced drivers. And if that weren't enough, the cold can aggravate small, pre-existing problems with your car and increase your chance of breaking down. So what can you do? Be prepared!

No one wants to be stranded in the cold, but sometimes we get unlucky. To help you weather any storm, Be Car Care Aware has prepared a list of top five emergency kit essentials:

1) Cell phone – Always be sure to have a fully charged cell phone with you so that you can call for help if needed. Even when you're out of service range, your phone should be able to connect you to 911 in case of an emergency.

2) Snow brush/ice scraper and windshield washer fluid – Visibility is everything when freezing rain, snow, and ice are accumulating on your windshield, mirrors, and lights. Keep a snow brush and ice scraper in your car to make sure you can see where you're going and an extra jug of windshield washer fluid.

3) Flashlight – In the darker months of the year, it can be difficult to see and be seen, so be sure to keep a waterproof flashlight with charged batteries in your car.

4) Warm blanket – Running your engine for extended periods of time can put you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, so keep a blanket or sleeping bag in your car to keep you warm if you're stranded. It's also a good idea to keep an extra pair of warm socks and mitts in your kit.

5) Shovel – Keep a small shovel in your car in case you get stuck and need to dig yourself out of a snowbank or parking spot.

Other items you should include are:

First aid kit: Include essential items like adhesive tape, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic wipes, aspirin, bandages, gauze, and scissors.

Tools: An adjustable wrench, a flat head and Phillips screwdriver, a pair of pliers, a tire jack and crow bar, roadside flares, reflectors, and booster cables.

Miscellaneous items: Extra set of wiper blades, work gloves, winter boots, energy bars, and bottled water.

To keep you and your family safe this winter, don't omit the "kit" – keep a well-stocked emergency kit in your trunk.

It's better to have it and not need it than to be stuck without it!

For more tips to keep you safe on the road this winter, visit www.BeCarCareAware.ca and follow @BeCarCareAware on Twitter.



Here's to a decade

It's been 10 years since Mile One Mobile opened its shop doors at its location just north of Williamsburg. In that time, the business' client list has grown exponentially, as has its workforce. From truck and trailer repairs, the firm has consistently stuck to its motto "From big to small, we fix them all." Aside from also offering 24-hour roadside assistance, the shop is a licenced safety facility, and undertakes custom air-conditioning repair and alignment services. To mark the first decade of service, employees hosted a celebration Fri., Oct. 23 complete with a barbecue lunch and cake for dessert. Also included in the event was an opportunity for guests to meet with supplier representatives and sponsors of the Mile One Mobile racecar. Pictured are: Adam Richmire (left), Carl Lapierre, Ashley Larmour, Mark Ault, Colin Patterson, Julie Mitchell, and Andy Lewis.

Press Photo – Uhrig

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Scrapers should only be used on windows and not on the body of the car.

Protect your vehicle from snow and ice damage

Winter can be an unforgiving season. Freezing temperatures coupled with snow and ice can take its toll on people who live in climates where cold weather is a fact of winter life.

While winter can test people's patience, it also can be harsh on cars and trucks. Understanding what components of a vehicle can be compromised by dropping temperatures and snowy roads can help drivers take action to safeguard their automotive investments.

While the Canadian Automobile Association notes that winter can wreak havoc on just about every part of a vehicle, there are some parts that seem to bear the brunt of Old Man Winter's abuse. Properly servicing and caring for a car or truck can help.

Drivers should take their vehicles for a tune up and inspection before wintry weather arrives. A mechanic will examine the car battery and check antifreeze levels and make sure that the thermostat, defroster, brakes, and even wiper blades are working effectively. Have the tires inspected for adequate tread, which can make navigating roads safer. If the treads are worn, replace the tires.

In addition to visiting their mechanics, drivers can perform some inspections and fixes themselves.

• Check that all of the vehicle's lights are operational so your car can be easily seen during inclement weather. Exchange your existing windshield washer fluid with one that will not freeze in cold conditions. Check the nozzles on the windshield-washer system routinely and clear out any blockages of ice or debris. While addressing windshield washer fluid, also replace worn out windshield wiper blades with ones that can withstand snow and icy weather.

• A new coating of wax can serve as a shield against road salt, snow, sleet, and rain. Try a polymer wax to protect the paint. Whenever possible, rinse off salt and grime so it does not dry on the car and gradually wear away at the paint. Some drivers mistakenly believe that salt stops being a problem once it dries simply because moisture is the active ingredient for a corrosive reaction. But humidity in the air is enough to keep the salt eating away at the car's paint, and that can contribute to rust. Be sure to rinse off the undercarriage of the vehicle as well.

• Have your tires' alignment checked toward the end of winter or early spring. A season of traveling over pothole-ridden roads or hitting curbs buried under snow drifts can affect the alignment. Get everything back on track. Similarly, inspect tires routinely, as weather changes can affect tire pressure and strength.

• Use a soft snow brush or a foam brush to clear snow off of the car. Avoid hard plastic scrapers you might use on your windshield, as they can scratch painted surfaces.

• Try to park the vehicle in a garage or under a carport, each of which can protect cars and trucks from the often harsh elements of winter.

Can your vehicle survive the deep freeze?

Many Canadians may opt to stay indoors as much as possible during the coldest days of winter. But when you do need to venture out into the icy air, how can you be sure that your vehicle will be up to getting you to where you need to go?

Cold weather is notoriously harsh on vehicles, which is why it's all the more important to give your car a little extra time and attention when the mercury dips. Fortunately, the Be Car Care Aware program has some tips to make sure that your car won't cause you any trouble.

Keep your car in top winter shape

Check your defroster – When the temperature drops, moisture in your vehicle condenses on your windows and impedes your visibility. Be sure to check that your defroster, which blows warm dry air on the glass, is in good working order before hitting the road. If you find that you're still having problems with condensation, check the gaskets around your windows and doors for leaks.

Replace your heater coil – In Canada's harsh climate, a working heater is a must in your vehicle to stave off shivers. If your heater isn't working properly, chances are you need to replace your heater coil. Though this can be an expensive repair, you'll be glad you made the investment.

Keep your gas tank half full – The air volume in your tank contains moisture that can freeze your fuel lines in cold temperatures. Keeping your fuel tank at least half full over the winter months will help prevent this freezing by limiting the air volume in the tank and will provide you with the benefit of extra weight for better traction on icy roads.

Switch to a winter-weight oil – In cold temperatures, your oil tends to thicken, preventing it from effectively lubricating your engine. To avoid engine trouble, check your owner's manual for the recommended type of cold weather oil and switch to a more viscous formulation.

Use the right amount of antifreeze – It's important to keep the right ratio of antifreeze and water in your radiator to prevent your coolant from freezing in cold weather. A 50:50 ratio is accepted as the norm, so consider using a pre-mixed solution to avoid getting the ratio wrong and to ensure that your engine runs effectively.

Check your battery – In frigid weather, the most common vehicle troubles are related to the battery.

Your battery should be changed every three to five years, so if you're having problems with starting your vehicle or with stalling, consider changing your battery. You should also check the battery to ensure that all the connections are tight and corrosion free. Finally, don't charge or jump your battery if it's frozen due to the risk of a rupture or explosion. When in doubt, leave it to the pros.

Let your car warm up – It's a good idea to let your engine warm up a bit before hitting the road in extreme cold to avoid grinding gears or causing undue stress to your engine. Just make sure to do it in an open space.

Wax your headlights – Fluctuations in temperature often lead to messy road conditions and your headlights can quickly become coated in frozen slush. To ensure optimal visibility, consider cleaning off your headlights, coating them with car wax, and then buffing the wax off. The resulting slippery surface will help to prevent frozen build-up.

No one wants to be stranded out in the cold, especially when wait times for assistance are exceedingly long. To keep your car in top winter shape, check out www.BeCarCareAware.ca.



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Young entrepreneur offers 'one-stop shop' for homes and cars

Alicia K. Gosselin

WINCHESTER

All of his life, Jordan Holmes has been interested in "toys for boys" – big trucks, lift kits, the latest mufflers, custom rims, and everything in between.

And although the 25-year-old started out his young career working in the trucking industry, he ended up taking a turn into the fast lane this year by becoming an entrepreneur and opening up an automotive and home specialty shop within the village.

It's only been seven months since Holmes rented the 4,000-square-foot space that has become Dundas Performance and Security Holmes, but now he's working at his passion right in his hometown.

Not only does Holmes offer auto performance upgrades, detailing, and tires – not to mention thousands of available accessories for cars, trucks, and ATVs – he also has combined his interests to offer home security items and networks, such as cameras and alarms.

"I put two and two together, and it's worked really well," he said. "People who want to spend money on their trucks probably want to watch what they have in their yard. [And] it's good to have multiple aspects of the business…More room to grow."

Holmes' entire security inventory comes through TDL Canada, a mogul among the province's residential and commercial distributers, while much of his auto accessories and performance items comes through Action Car and Truck Accessories, Canada's largest automotive accessories retailer.

Although he's based in the village, Holmes has far-reaching access to thousands of products that can be customized to enhance the two places people spend most of their time – in their homes and in their vehicles.

"It's kind of a one-stop shop for anyone who doesn't have time to waste," said Holmes. "I can pretty much order anything at wholesale price, which helps. And if someone comes in and says, 'I want my car to go faster,' I can sit down with the person and actually walk them through what they need."

As a young entrepreneur, Holmes said he is realistic about what he can accomplish in such a short time, but already sees the potential for growth in the community by working with local businesses and promoting local services.

One of the first strong community partnerships he has made is with another new local business called Dairymax Farm Solutions, which rents out a 400-square-foot space from Holmes to use as a storefront. The small storefront opens up into a 5,000-square-foot space just behind Holmes' shop dedicated to robotic feeders and milkers.

"It's been pretty helpful to have [the Dairymax manager] there," said Holmes, referring to Dairymax's James Casey, who occupies the shared storefront. "He gives me tips on the business side of things, which I didn't expect at all."

By doing this, Holmes has not only opened himself up to the agricultural clientele that come into Dairymax, but has also been able to create solid relationships with fellow business-owners.

Dairymax Farm Solutions will be hosting an open house on Thurs., Nov. 12 with several community partners attending, which will also be an opportunity for Holmes to promote his business.

"The hardest part has been just getting my name out there, but I'm not here to compete, I'm here to grow with everyone," he said.

As his business grows, Holmes sees the need to eventually hire someone to help him out with handling orders and consults, as he also does at-home calls for security consults. All around, he just wants to spend as much time as he can with the customers to give them the best experience.

"If someone comes in here and they don't know exactly what they want, I'm not one that will push. I will spend some time with them, tell them what they need, what I would get, and when they come back to me and say it was the greatest decision they ever made, that's when I feel good," Holmes said.

Dundas Performance and Holmes Security is located at 12054 Winchester Main St.



Jordan Holmes, 25, decided to turn his interests into a business by opening up an automotive and home specialty shop called Dundas Performance and Security Holmes within the village seven months ago. The one-stop shop offers auto performance upgrades, detailing, and tires – not to mention thousands of available accessories for cars, trucks, and ATVs – as well as home security items and networks, such as cameras and alarms.
Press Photo – Gosselin

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Restoring the balance

According to technician Steve Knapp from W.J.L. Boyd and Sons, balancing your vehicle's tires at least once a year has multiple benefits. Not only can it increase traction and stability, it can lead to a longer tire life by minimizing wear and damage, as well as preventing rim corrosion. "We got this digital balancer when we started selling tires, and it helps us get the job done a lot faster and more accurately [than the manual way]," said Knapp. "The machine is laser controlled and tells the technician exactly where to put the weights." He recommends getting tires balanced if you see any vibration in your steering wheel, seat, or floorboard when driving at highway speeds, as well as if you notice any unusual tread wear patterns on the tires. In addition to standard automotive repairs and servicing, the company has been selling and repairing tires for nearly four years now, and is promoting snow tire rebates before winter starts.
Press Photo – Gosselin

Crash course

Kyle Mordy (right) from D's Collision Center primes several parts of a customer's car that was sideswiped during an accident before it was sent for the final paint job. The center has become a go-to repair spot for local drivers, as some of the services offered are bodywork, paint jobs, bumper repairs, windshield replacements, automotive detailing, alignment and suspension repairs, wheel repairs, rust work, and more. "If somebody's in an accident, we are able to accommodate them with the rental vehicle, and work directly with their insurance company to make everything as smooth as possible," said co-owner Phil Carkner. Since the company's expansion two years ago, Carkner said that it has been "a great help," as it has given them extra space to handle more volume, and creates less of a delay for their customers. Carkner also mentioned that this is the season they are seeing a lot of deer and animal hits, so having the expansion has made repairs more efficient.
Press Photo – Gosselin





Thinking smart (and small)

At Williamsburg's Troy Wilson Automotive, the shop's namesake has clients giving thought to not only smarter vehicle systems, but ones that are much more compact than the typical line of automobiles. As one of the only shops in the area with a dedication to servicing Smart cars, Wilson says his schedule remains full with diagnosing all manner of issues with the noticeably small automobiles. The technician doesn't mind, however, as the car's operating system is located entirely in the trunk and Wilson notes he has "never thrown my back out working on one of these." But, that doesn't mean the village shop doesn't service all makes and models. In fact, Wilson's broad section of knowledge has him working on multiple vehicle brands especially now that winter's weather is on its way.
Press Photo – Uhrig

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Shop TALK

Press reporters Matt Uhrig and Alicia K. Gosselin take a look at the work going on at some of our local automotive service centres.



Change of tune

The team at Precision Diesel Heavy Duty Centre can maximize an engine's potential by simply tuning the electric control module (ECM) in trucks, tractors, buses, and RVs. President Richard Wubs said that getting a tune-up can enhance performance in an engine by increasing fuel savings by up to 25 per cent, while also getting more power and torque. Evan Schmidt (pictured) enjoys "giving more power," and does all of the tune-ups for customers to prevent too many hands going into one job. "Instead of buying a new truck, you can put that money into customizing it how you want," said Schmidt. "I did a simple tune-up to one of [our customers'] trucks… He went to Toronto and back, and went from 800 [kilometres] per tank to 1,100 [kilometres]." The Winchester-based garage also offers most brands of diesel performance accessories, such as horsepower and towing enhancers, performance exhaust and air filters, specialized sensor gauges, and lift-kits for pickup trucks. Press Photo – Gosselin



Winter is coming

It's that time of year again, and the crew at D and J Motors are seeing a surge of people scrambling to get their vehicles winterized before the cold months hit. According to technician Matt Richardson (pictured), some of the most important ways a car owner can increase their safety during the winter include installing snow tires, getting fluids (such as coolant) checked, changing the oil, checking the battery and brakes, ensuring the block heater and defroster works, and checking that the windshield wipers work. As a family owned and operated business in the village for more than 30 years, D and J Motors offers a variety of automotive servicing for drivers of all makes and models, as well as tire and used car sales. Press Photo – Gosselin



Need tires?

With winter on the way, area drivers are no doubt starting to think about the needs of their vehicles to make it through another season. One of the biggest things required? Tires, of course. At Pinkus Tire and Battery Kingdom in Williamsburg, the shop, which has been serving the region for more than 70 years, has a full line of winter and all-season tires. One of the biggest selling brands is Cooper Tires. Pictured at left are technicians Steve Ault (left), Chris Merkley, Dereck Margison, and Kyle Merkley. Press Photo – Uhrig

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With the myriad of expenses that we face every day, you may be tempted to put off vehicle maintenance to save a few bucks – and you certainly wouldn't be alone – but is saving a few bucks worth risking your life?

On average, five people die on Canada's roads each day. Though many of these collisions can be attributed to driving under the influence, driving distracted, or poor driving conditions, it would be ignorant to overlook the importance of the mechanical integrity.

Today's cars are safer than ever before, but with wear and tear, many of your car's critical safety components can degrade. Ignoring this fact can put you and your family at risk of having a collision or of being seriously injured in the event of a crash.

Brakes

It's no secret that your brakes are one of your car's most important safety components, but with use, your brake pads/shoes wear out, rubber seals and hoses deteriorate causing brake fluid leaks, and metal components can rust and corrode. As these parts degrade, you are required to use an increasing amount of force on the pedal to stop your vehicle and need an increasing amount of time to stop. When you only have a few seconds to react to a dangerous situation on the road, the condition of your brakes can make all the difference, so have them inspected regularly and never put off needed repairs.

Lights

Your lights are essential to ensuring proper visibility on the road. When driving, it is important that you can see and be seen to avoid collisions. Give yourself the best chance to arrive safely by regularly inspecting your lights and replacing them when necessary. You should also check your light covers to ensure that they are clean and clear. With the time, the plastic can degrade and cloud, distorting your light and reducing your field of view in the dark. The further you can see, the more time you have to react.

Steering and suspension

Like most of your car's components, the parts that make up your steering and suspension system are prone to wear and tear damage and may lead to dangerous situations. For example, if your tie rod ends fail you will lose all steering control of your vehicle and risk veering sharply on the road, and if your ball joints fail your suspension can collapse, also causing to lose all steering control. When navigating city streets or busy highways, a loss of steering control can be catastrophic, so be sure to have your steering and suspension system inspected regularly and replace any worn parts.

Tires

Your tires are your car's point of contact with the road and play a crucial role in your car's safety. Underinflated tires can cause your tires to overheat and blow out, while overinflated tires reduce your contact with the road and wear more quickly. Uneven tread wear and bald spots also cause problems because they reduce your control on the road, increase your stopping distance, and increase your risk of hydroplaning or skidding. Finally, relying on all-season tires in the winter can increase your risk of a collision by reducing your grip on the road in temperatures below 7 degrees Celsius. Check your tire pressure and tread wear regularly, have them rotated as per the manufacturer's recommendations, and use appropriate tires for the season to maintain maximum control.

Though vehicle safety technology is ever-improving, your car is not immune to wear and tear. Be sure to have your vehicle inspected regularly and to budget for unexpected repairs to avoid dangerous collisions. Spending a few bucks is certainly worth the peace of mind that your car will respond to your driving.

For more information on car care, visit www.BeCarCareAware.ca.

How to respond when encountering animals on the road

In the summer of 2015, a video of dozens of cars swerving to avoid a family of ducks crossing a busy Minnesota freeway went viral. While no people or ducks were injured in that incident, impromptu animal crossings are a potential hazard on roadways where drivers are unaccustomed to sharing the road with four-legged counterparts. In the wake of the video, area officials urged drivers not to stop for animals because of the hazards posed by sudden stopping.

Drivers may have mixed feelings on whether or not to put their lives in jeopardy to save an errant animal, but sometimes there is little time to make a decision.

Knowing what to do when encountering animals on the road can help drivers avoid accidents and injuries.

• Experts advise drivers to remain in their lanes and to attempt to slow down as quickly as possible when encountering animals on the road. Move slowly in the direction the animal was coming from if it's safe, as animal instinct is to dart out in the direction it was going.

• Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Scan the edges of the road to see if animals are present. Dawn and dusk are key times for animals to be on the move looking for food. Autumn is both hunting and mating season for deer, and they tend to travel a lot during this time of year.

• Obey speed limits and take signs warning of animal crossing hotspots seriously.

• Should you hit an animal, do not exit the car and approach it. Injured animals can be dangerous, with pain driving them to flail, kick, or bite.

Sharing roadways with animals is tricky. Remaining alert, slowing down in highly populated wildlife areas and avoiding swerving can reduce risk of accident or injury.

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Snow tires a worthy investment

Automotive experts say that snow tires are a worthy investment that improve manoeuvrability and stopping power on winter roads. Many people leave all-season tires on their vehicles throughout the year, but snow tires may help decrease snow-related accidents and may even help drivers save money on their auto insurance.

Consumer Reports says that autumn is the best time to buy snow tires. As drivers prepare their vehicles for winter, the following snow tire tutorial can shed some light on why driving in winter is safer with snow tires.

• Snow tires are particularly helpful for people who cannot wait for roads to be cleared before they begin their days. Snow tires provide greater traction in wet, snowy, or slushy conditions. Snow tires provide ample grip and make it easier for cars to turn corners and stop on slick roads.

• As the mercury falls, the rubber used to make traditional tires can become hard and less pliable, compromising its ability to grip the road. However, many snow tires are made with a specialized rubber that remains supple even in very cold temperatures, making it easier for the tire to hug the roadways even when those roads are in poor condition.

• People who live in very cold climates and areas where snow and ice dominate the landscape for several months per year often find all-season tires are inadequate and likely to slip. Snow tires make for safer alternatives in such regions.

• Snow tires are typically manufactured the previous summer, meaning inventory is finite, according to Consumer Reports. Drivers who wait until the first snowstorm to purchase their snow tires may encounter limited inventory and find it difficult to locate the right size tire for their vehicles. That's why it's important to shop early.

• Retire snow tires earlier than you would all-season tires. Snow tires lose almost all of their effectiveness once they reach 6/32-inch deep tread.

How to use jumper cables

Chances are, at some point in your life, you'll likely encounter a dead battery, either with your car or with the vehicle of a friend or family member.

The next time you come across a battery that just won't fire up, here's a guide you can follow to safely boost the car using jumper cables.

1. Park the booster vehicle so it's close to car with the dead battery. You want them close enough so that the jumper cables will reach, but the cars can't be so close that they touch.

2. Turn off the ignition of both cars. Make sure both cars are in park (or in neutral if they have a manual transmission), put on the parking brakes, and double check that all the car accessories are turned off. Unplug anything that's hooked up to the cigarette lighter, including cell phones or a GPS.

3. Check to make sure the jumper cables you're using are well insulated and clean. As you prepare to connect the cables, you may want to consider wearing protective eye equipment as well as safety gloves.

4. If the battery in the dead car is cracked or leaking, do not try to jump the vehicle. Doing so could cause an explosion. If the battery is in this type of condition, it's likely time for a replacement. If the terminals on either battery are corroded, wipe them clean (while wearing gloves to protect your hands) to ensure that the clamps can make a solid connection.

5. Connect the positive end (typically red) of one of the jumper cables to the positive terminal on the dead battery (labeled with a "+" sign). Generally the battery's positive terminal is larger than the negative one and could have a cover on it. Attach the other end of the positive cable to the positive terminal of the booster car.

6. Attach the negative end of the cable (typically black) to the negative battery terminal (marked with a "-" sign) on the booster car. Connect the other end of the negative cable to an unpainted metal surface on the engine of the dead car. This could be an unpainted bolt or bracket that is as far from the dead battery as possible. Doing this provides a solid ground and reduces the possibility of igniting the hydrogen gas emitted by the car battery. You want to make sure that the last jumper connection made is the dead battery, not the live battery on the booster car.

7. Visually check that jumper cables are connected securely to the battery. Make sure that the cables aren't dangling near any moving engine parts in either vehicle.

8. Start the booster car and let the booster car idle for several minutes. The length of idle time depends on how dead the battery is. If it's an old battery that's been dead for longer than a month, then the boost process could take a while. If the battery is new and drained due to lights or accessories left on, then the battery won't need a lot of idling time.

9. Start the dead car and let both vehicles idle. If the dead vehicle doesn't start, don't persist or you could damage the starter. At this point, you might want to consider other factors as to why the vehicle won't start.

10. Once the dead vehicle has been boosted, remove the jumper cables in the reverse order. Watch that you don't let the cables fall into the engine or allow the cable ends to touch each other. Disconnect the negative cable (typically black) from the engine block or unpainted surface of the car that was jump started – this will break the circuit. Then unhook the other end of the negative cable (black) from the negative post (marked with a "-" sign) of the booster car battery. Remove the positive cable (typically red) from the positive terminal (marked with a "+" sign) of the booster car battery. The final step is to disconnect the other end of the positive cable (red)



from the positive post (marked with a "+" sign) of the formerly dead battery.

11. Drive the car that was just jumped to a safe place before you turn off the engine. Depending on the condition of the battery (new versus old), it could require another boost to get the juices properly flowing, so keep in mind when you shut it off that there is a chance you'll have to repeat the boost process to get it back on again.

Take caution

Take extreme caution when working around a battery as it has the potential to produce explosive gases. Use cables that are free of corrosion and ones that can connect securely to the battery.

Wear protective equipment and refrain from smoking or lighting a match around the battery.

If you're looking to purchase jumper cables, buy ones that are the best quality you can afford. You want cables with well-insulated lamps and at least 8-gauge wire.

Don't let the cables touch each other as this can seriously damage the car computer and its charging system.

If at any point in this process you are unsure, call a professional for help.

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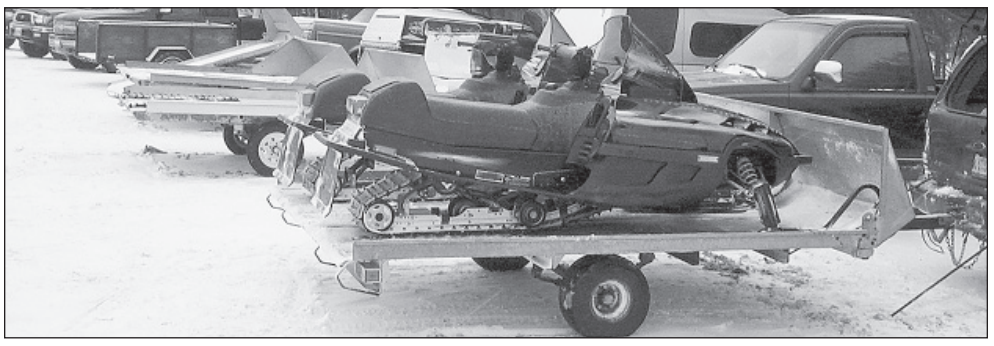
The basics of driving with trailers in tow

Active adults and busy families understand that one perk to owning a pickup truck or an SUV is the ability to tow items behind the vehicle. Many of these trucks already come equipped with trailer hitches that make it possible to tow boats, RVs, snowmobiles, and more. But safe and successful towing requires knowledge of the basics of hitching a trailer and some special rules of the road. The following are a few safety tips for drivers unaccustomed to towing.



Safely and successfully driving with a trailer takes practice and patience.

• Know your vehicle's tow weight capacity. The owner's manual will list the maximum weight a vehicle can tow safely, but this is just a simplified estimation of data. To tow successfully, it's important to know your vehicle's gross combined weight rating, or GCWR. This includes the vehicle itself, its passengers and cargo, as well as the trailer, and the trailer's cargo. More passengers on board reduces the amount of weight you can pull. Another weight factor is the tongue weight, or how much of the trailer's weight rests on the hitch, which should be around 10 percent of the trailer's weight. This helps reduce trailer sway and can improve steering.

• Practice proper weight distribution. Distribute the weight of the item being towed to make towing smoother and safer. The cargo's centre of gravity should be low, and most of the weight should be toward the front. Weight on either side also should be even. These steps will help prevent the trailer from fishtailing or flipping over.

• Use the right hitch equipment. Adjust the hitch so that the trailer being towed is relatively level to your vehicle when attached. Connect lights to your trailer through the hitch system so that brake lights and other indicators work properly. Make sure the hitch ball is the right size for your trailer, otherwise the trailer might disconnect during towing. Use a pin and safety chains to keep the trailer secure.

• If your trailer has a gross trailer weight, vehicle, and load of 1,360 kilograms or more, it must have brakes strong enough to stop and hold the trailer.

• Lights: Your trailer must have a white licence plate light, a red tail light, two red reflectors at the rear of the trailer as far apart as possible. If your trailer is wider than 2.05 metres, it must also have: two yellow clearance lights, one on each side at the front of the trailer, as far apart as possible to let drivers coming toward you know the width of your trailer; two red clearance lights, or reflectors, one on each side at the rear of the trailer, as far apart as possible to let drivers behind you know the width of your trailer.

Your trailer must have mud guards, fenders and flaps, or be designed in such a way that it does not spray or splash traffic travelling behind you.

If the load in your trailer blocks your vision to the rear, you must have additional mirrors that provide a clear view of the road to the rear. Load your trailer carefully so that nothing comes loose or falls off while you are moving.

• Slow down and drive more cautiously. A vehicle towing a trailer will not manoeuvre the same way as a vehicle without a trailer attached. Give yourself a greater cushion of space between other vehicles. It may take longer for you to brake because of the added weight. Get used to using side-view mirrors because the trailer may block your rearview. Larger, extended side-view mirrors may help you feel more comfortable and safe. Make wide turns so that the trailer will clear curbs and not tip over.

• Avoid backing up. Unless you're experienced with driving large rigs, you may find reversing with a trailer very challenging. Limit situations that require backing up. Park in pull-through parking spots when possible. If you need to back up, move slowly and with your hand on the bottom of the steering wheel, turning it in the direction you want the trailer to go.

• Practice, practice, practice. Get acclimated with towing in a parking lot or on empty streets before taking your trailer out on the open road.

Canadian driving = severe driving

As you flip through your vehicle's owner manual, you're likely to notice that it has two different service interval schedules – one for "normal" driving and one for "severe" driving." Severe driving should not be confused with aggressive driving. It refers to the conditions in which you drive rather the way in which you drive. Even the most cautious and patient driver in Canada drives in severe conditions thanks to Mother Nature.

The conditions that manufacturers identify as being severe vary slightly, but severe driving conditions are typically defined as:

• driving in cold weather;
• driving in extremely hot weather (over 32°C);
• extensive idling (e.g. at traffic lights);
• driving in stop-and-go traffic;
• taking trips that are shorter than 8 kilometers or, in freezing temperatures, shorter than 16 kilometers;
• towing a trailer or driving with a roof rack;
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Five things you should know about driving clean

WINCHESTER

As part of an initiative to curb the amount of exhaust fumes coming from cars on the roads, the Ontario government introduced the Drive Clean program in 1999.

Since then, vehicles seven years and older are subject to an emissions test (e-test) every two years to minimize the amount of air pollution and smog being contributed by fuel. The Drive Clean test determines if the vehicle meets Ontario's emissions standards, and must be passed in order to renew a registration or licence plate.

"Drive Clean has come a long way… It's really strictly monitored by the government," said Bob Fetterly, shop foreman at Winchester Automotive Services. "Basically, we hook up to the [e-test] computer, follow the paces that it sets, and it monitors everything we are doing during the test."

Most of the time, if a vehicle is properly maintained, it should have no problem passing the test. But sometimes, it's not that simple.

"A challenge for us is explaining how the protocol works, why [someone] failed, how they can re-take it and pass," said Fetterly. "Sometimes customers don't understand that the government sets out all those guidelines, so we have no control whether the vehicle passes or fails."

According to Fetterly, the high-tech emissions-testing equipment and certifications are certainly a business expense, but at Winchester Automotive Services, the service is offered so customers can get all their vehicle maintenance and repairs done in-house.

Check out five tidbits to remember before you find out if you're "driving clean."



Bob Fetterly, shop foreman at Winchester Automotive Services, demonstrated how the emissions test is completed using a computerized system that is closely monitored and calibrated for accuracy. The results of the test are compared with set standards in a central database that facilitates monitoring and auditing of tests. "It's pretty high-tech," said Fetterly. "When we do the test, we put a headset on so that if anything comes up that's irregular, [the ministry] can audit live through the earpiece." *Press Photo – Gosselin*

1. There are different e-test types for different cars.

According to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, there are two types of vehicles that are subject to the test – light-duty vehicles (cars, vans, and SUVs weighing less than 4,500 kilograms) and heavy-duty vehicles (large trucks, motor homes, and buses weighing more than 4,500 kilograms). Depending on the vehicle, the test could involve an on-board diagnostic test (which reads emissions information from the vehicle's computer), a tailpipe test (which measures tailpipe emissions), and an opacity test (which measures smoke density in diesel-fuelled vehicles).

2. If your check engine light is on, you will fail.

"The best thing to do if your check engine light is on, is to come in and we can advise you on how to fix it before the e-test," said Fetterly. "Some people are afraid it will cost them a bunch of money to repair their car before passing, but that's not necessarily the case – there are a lot of things we can do to get the car to pass the test without spending a bunch money."

3. The test doesn't apply to vehicles made in 1987 and earlier.

Light-duty vehicles built in 1988 were the first to comply with strict vehicle emissions and durability standards, according to the ministry, and although older vehicles do not require a Drive Clean test, they are still subject to being stopped by a police officer if the vehicle is emitting excessive exhaust smoke.

Some other vehicles that are exempt include most hybrid-electric cars, vehicles that are plated "historic" under the *Highway Traffic Act*, light-duty commercial farm-plated vehicles, kit cars, and motorcycles.

4. Technicians are monitored live throughout the test.

All Drive Clean facilities have computerized, "tamper-proof" equipment that is regularly calibrated for accuracy. The results of the test are compared with set standards in a central database that facilitates monitoring and auditing of tests. "It's pretty high-tech and closely monitored," said Fetterly. "When we do the test, we put a headset on so that if anything comes up that's irregular, [the ministry] can audit live through the earpiece."

5. Put your car through its "drive cycle" before you take a re-test.

If your vehicle doesn't pass the emissions test on the first go, there is an opportunity to take a re-test. It's recommended that before you do, you should put your car through its drive cycle, which depends on the make and model of car, and can be found out by checking your owner's manual. Generally, the vehicle must sit for a minimum of eight hours without a start, and then be driven for a few days in normal driving conditions.

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