# spring... ON THE ROAD

May 2015



a special supplement to the
**Winchester Press**

## NDDHS Students
fine-tune automotive skills





## Rebuild
**Grade 12 student takes on heavy-duty project.**

**Our Spring... ON THE ROAD special section is fully loaded with helpful features for today's drivers.**

***Plus,*** **get more mileage from your car care dollars with special offers and valuable advertising from area automobile experts!**

## CAR CARE
Maintenance, Road Safety, Eco-Driving



# NDDHS students learning skills on own vehicles

MAPLE RIDGE – What better way to learn a trade than by repairing, rebuilding and reclaiming your own vehicle?

Currently, Andrew Whitton's senior transportation technology students at North Dundas District High School are using their personal property to fine tune their automotive skills.

**Featured on our cover**

Jamie Rodney, a Grade 12 student, purchased a 2001 Dodge Ram 2500 pickup, powered by a 24-valve turbo diesel engine. The heavy-duty truck has 640,000 kms on it and needed a full replacement of steering and front-end suspension components.

Rodney said she bought the truck in January because she needed to transport her horses by trailer to show jumping competitions.

The heavy hauler, sporting huge twin exhaust stacks, has been in the shop at North Dundas for a month while Rodney systematically acquires new parts and replaces them.

"I needed something to haul my trailer so I bought the truck," she said. "It needed to be fixed, so I'm fixing it."

Rodney explained the engine was good, the brakes were good, but she really needs new tires.

So far she has replaced the steering box, track bar, all four ball joints and tie rod ends. Yet to come are new front universal joints, steering dampener and sector shaft.

Whitton explained a reason the project has taken so long is because the student has to buy all the parts.

"And even at cost top of the line parts are expensive," he said. "So, when she can afford them [parts] they are replaced."

## New power

At the same time, Noah Thom is powering up his 1990 Chevy Silverado half-ton.

He and his classmates have removed the 305 cubic inch small block and are installing a 350 power plant.

Once the engine is installed and fired up, Thom's attention will be turned to body repair, brake replacement and steering upgrades.



***Diversified***

*Jamie Rodney is not only an honour student, she is a self-taught and accomplished equestrian. Now, the Winchester resident is rebuilding the steering and suspension on her 2001 Dodge Ram 2500, 24-valve turbo diesel truck through the transportation technology program at North Dundas District High School. Rodney is planning to use the big blue Dodge to trailer her horses to show jumping competitions.*

*Press Photo – Van Bridger*





***More power***

*North Dundas District High School transportation technology teacher Andrew Whitton (second left) supervised students Noah Jaquemet, Kyle Backes, Sjoerd Sterkenburgh and Thomas Gutknecht as they removed the 305 engine from Noah Thom's' (photo right, far right) 1990 Chevy Silverado. Thom is going to replace it with a 350 power plant before restoring the body, and repairing the brakes and steering.*

*Press Photos – Van Bridger*


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# Low rolling resistance tires equals fuel savings

Many of us have experienced the effect of rolling resistance (RR) when riding a bicycle with underinflated knobby tires, in contrast to smooth-tread tires inflated to a higher pressure. A cyclist expends less effort when using smooth road tires.

The effect of RR is similar in our vehicles, except that we never really notice it as much since the engine is doing the work.



Did you know that rolling resistance from tires accounts for about four to seven per cent of your vehicle's fuel consumption? In fact, auto manufacturers commonly install low rolling resistance tires as original equipment on new vehicles to help improve efficiency.

Most tire manufacturers are also offering low rolling resistance (LRR) replacement tires, which can reduce the overall fuel consumption of your vehicle by about one to four per cent, compared to conventional replacement tires.

LRR tires are designed to improve vehicle fuel efficiency without compromising safety – and tire designers use innovative materials, construction methods and tread patterns to reduce the amount of RR and in turn, the amount of fuel consumed.

Ask your local tire retailer about LRR tires and look for cost estimation tools online. Several tire manufacturers and retailers provide online calculators to help drivers make informed tire choices. Look for calculators that provide comparisons of tread life durability, wet traction safety, rolling resistance and total cost of ownership.

There is more information about fuel efficiency on the Natural Resources Canada website at www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca.

*— News Canada*

# Fun amenities to consider for your next vehicle

Today's automobiles come with more gadgets than ever before. New car buyers can now choose from a host of amenities geared toward making roads easier to navigate and long trips more comfortable.

Whereas nonessential amenities once cost buyers a substantial amount of money, nowadays many auto manufacturers include options once considered luxuries in their standard packages.

• **Satellite radio:** Satellite radio has been around for awhile, but only recently did it begin to become a standard offering in new vehicles. Drivers who buy a new car may find a deal where their initial satellite radio subscription is included in the cost of the vehicle, while others may need to foot the bill for their subscriptions.

• **Television:** Some auto manufacturers have begun to offer broadcast television in their vehicles, which is made possible by a built-in television antenna that is capable of picking up nearby channels.

• **Massaging seats:** Massaging seats are typically limited to the backseats, but they work in similar fashion to massaging armchairs. Passengers or even drivers taking a break on a long road tip can jump into the back of their cars, recline the backseat, and then enjoy a massage to iron out all those aches and pains.

• **Adaptive lights:** If you're the type of driver who prefers his or her amenities be more about function than luxury, then adaptive lights might be the perfect feature for you. Adaptive lights may swivel as an automobile turns a corner, making it easier for drivers to see. Some adaptive headlights also can sense darkness, protecting drivers who may be distracted by the amenities inside their vehicles and forget to turn their lights on the moment twilight arrives or the sun sets.

# Regular vehicle maintenance can keep money in your wallet

Older vehicles require more TLC to keep them running efficiently and safely. Staying on top of your vehicle's maintenance schedule means that it will emit fewer greenhouse gases and will be less likely to run into problems that can lead to expensive repairs and potentially dangerous breakdowns.

It's important to remember that you need to invest in regular maintenance. Not doing so – especially for an older vehicle – means that you are reducing your car's lifespan and are likely to have to pay for expensive repairs down the road."

Bottom-line benefits of regular vehicle maintenance include:

**1. More mileage:** A well-serviced vehicle has an increased fuel economy of ten percent and will cost you significantly less at the pump.

**2. Less costly repairs:** Simple things like having your oil changed regularly can correct small problems that, if left unchecked, can lead to costly repairs down the road.

**3. Less Accident-related expenses:** Regular vehicle maintenance may cost you a few dollars today, but taking care of your car keeps you safe on the road and helps you prevent accidents, which typically cause your insurance premiums to soar and your monthly payments to increase dramatically.

**4. Higher resale value:** A vehicle that has been serviced as per its manufacturer recommended service guide, with proper records, is likely to have a higher resale value than one that hasn't.

**5. Longer life for your car:** Regular maintenance will prolong the life span of your vehicle, therefore postponing the need for a new car. This will allow you to save more money for your next vehicle down payment, or pay off other debts.

For more vehicle maintenance and safety tips, visit www.becarcareaware.ca.

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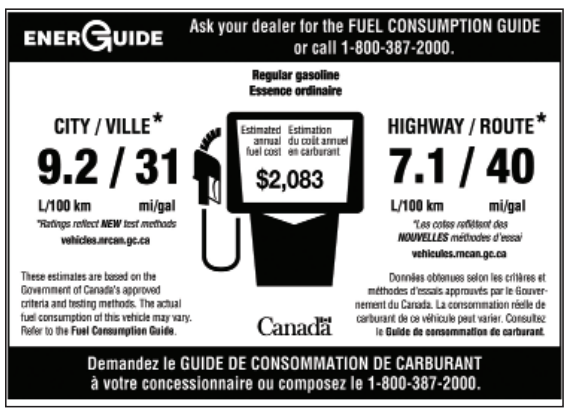
# Fuel efficiency tests changing for model year 2015




Up to now, fuel consumption ratings were based on two tests conducted in laboratories, but beginning with model year 2015, manufacturers have been using an improved testing procedure to determine the fuel consumption ratings of new light-duty vehicles. The federal government has announced new test methods that result in fuel consumption ratings which are more reflective of typical Canadian driving conditions and styles.

These new methods add to the old city and highway tests by integrating three new tests that account for air conditioner usage, cold temperature operation, and driving at higher speeds with more rapid acceleration and braking. The new five-cycle testing results in fuel consumption ratings that are on average 10-20 per cent higher compared to the old ratings, but are more representative of typical on-road driving conditions and styles.

While it can get confusing when comparing the same 2014 and 2015 model, be aware that manufacturers are not producing less fuel-efficient vehicles but rather that the new test methods used to determine the fuel consumption ratings are simply more reflective of on-road driving conditions and styles.

You can find information about fuel-efficient vehicle choices and tips for eco-driving on the Natural Resources website at www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca and www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/transportation/cars-light-trucks/buying/16223.

*— News Canada*

# Simple defensive driving techniques anyone can employ

Driving defensively is a great way for motorists to reduce their risks of accident, maintain their vehicles over the long haul and save money on their auto insurance. But driving can be habit-forming, and over time many drivers develop habits that can compromise their safety on the road.

No driver wants to make roads less safe, and many may just need to reacquaint themselves with the following defensive driving techniques they learned way back when they first started driving as teenagers.

• **Avoid distractions.** It's easy to be distracted whether you're driving alone on an empty road or sitting in rush hour traffic with dozens of your fellow commuters. That's because today's vehicles may be equipped with televisions, smartphone hookups, and high-quality sound systems that can take drivers' attention away from the road. Drivers may even be bringing additional distractions with them into their vehicles. When getting behind the wheel, keep your stereo speakers low and turn off all of your devices so you aren't tempted to check emails or text messages while driving.

• **Don't be in such a hurry.** Perhaps the most effective defensive driving technique is to slow down when on the road. That's easier said than done, especially for commuters who are running late and trying to get to the office on time. But making a conscious effort to slow down, even if you are a few minutes late for work or running late for an appointment, can mean the difference between getting into an accident or staying safe on the road. If you know you are running late, don't try to compensate by driving fast. Instead, call ahead to let whoever might be waiting for you know that you will be a few minutes late.

• **Don't lane hop.** Frequent switching between lanes can make other drivers nervous, increasing the risk of an accident. In addition, sudden or frequent lane changes can make it difficult for drivers to maintain their focus on the road and see more than a few cars ahead of them. Drivers who have been on the road for a long time may feel confident in their abilities to quickly switch between lanes, but fellow motorists may find such shifting distracting and begin to drive erratically as a result. Stay in one lane as long as possible, and only pass cars on the left.

• **Don't respond to aggressive drivers.** If a fellow driver is driving aggressively, slow down and let them pass or pull over and let them get far away from you before you return to the roadway. Studies have indicated that road rage incidents escalate when drivers make eye contact with one another. Even if you are not at fault, it's up to you to avoid a potentially dangerous situation and protect yourself and your passengers.

Defensive driving techniques reduce the risk of accidents and help to keep cars running strong over the long haul. Drivers can benefit from periodically revisiting such techniques and practicing them on roadways.

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# D's Collision adds third location in Morrisburg




*D's Collision's Morrisburg satellite location allows customers to stop by their shop to get an estimate on their car before they bring it to the Winchester location.*

***by Nina Guy***

MORRISBURG

A second D's Collision satellite location has been added to the map.

Instead of making the long drive to Winchester, customers now have the opportunity to stop at the Morrisburg location at Upper Canada Motors to receive proper aid after an accident.

Two of the services offered at the satellite locations in Morrisburg and Kemptville are estimates and rental cars.

Staff members are also on location part-time to help the customers by appointment.

Satellite locations are convenient for customers, as they don't have to travel as far to receive estimates on their automobiles.

Because the Winchester location is the core of the company, there is a lot of travel involved for the employees, who must bring rental cars to the secondary locations for the customers in need.

Nevertheless, according to business owners Phil and Dennis Carkner, these locations are beneficial to the loyal customers of D's Collision.

"We have to make sure that we take care of our customers, first and foremost," Dennis said.

This is the second satellite location that has been added in the community, the first being placed in Kemptville more than two years ago. D's Collision's Morrisburg satellite location has been operational since March.

"Opportunities pop up, and [we have to go for it]," Phil said.

With word coming out that Upper Canada Motors' body shop in Morrisburg may be closing in the months to come, D's Collision's satellite location may expand in that area.

"It's a work in progress," Dennis said. "We're just trying to solidify our market."

D's Collision is a full-line repair shop that provides car estimates and repairs in various parts of the community, serving customers from as far away as Finch, Prescott, and Russell. It's going into its 27th year of business in Winchester.

# Five cool tips for driving without the air conditioning

The next time you find yourself driving in hot weather, think twice before turning on the AC. Air conditioning can increase fuel consumption by as much as 20 per cent since it uses engine power to drive the AC compressor which increases engine load.

1. Give your wallet and your vehicle's fuel consumption a break by using your air conditioning sparingly this summer. Ask yourself if you really need to cool off that badly or if habit is driving you to put on the AC.

2. For city driving, open a window and enjoy the fresh air.

3. For highway driving, use your flow-through ventilation to cool off.

4. Should air conditioning be a luxury you simply do not want to give up, select the re-circulate option as opposed to the fresh-air alternative to help minimize



the impact of air conditioning on fuel consumption.

More information is available on the Natural Resources Canada website, www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca.

*— News Canada*

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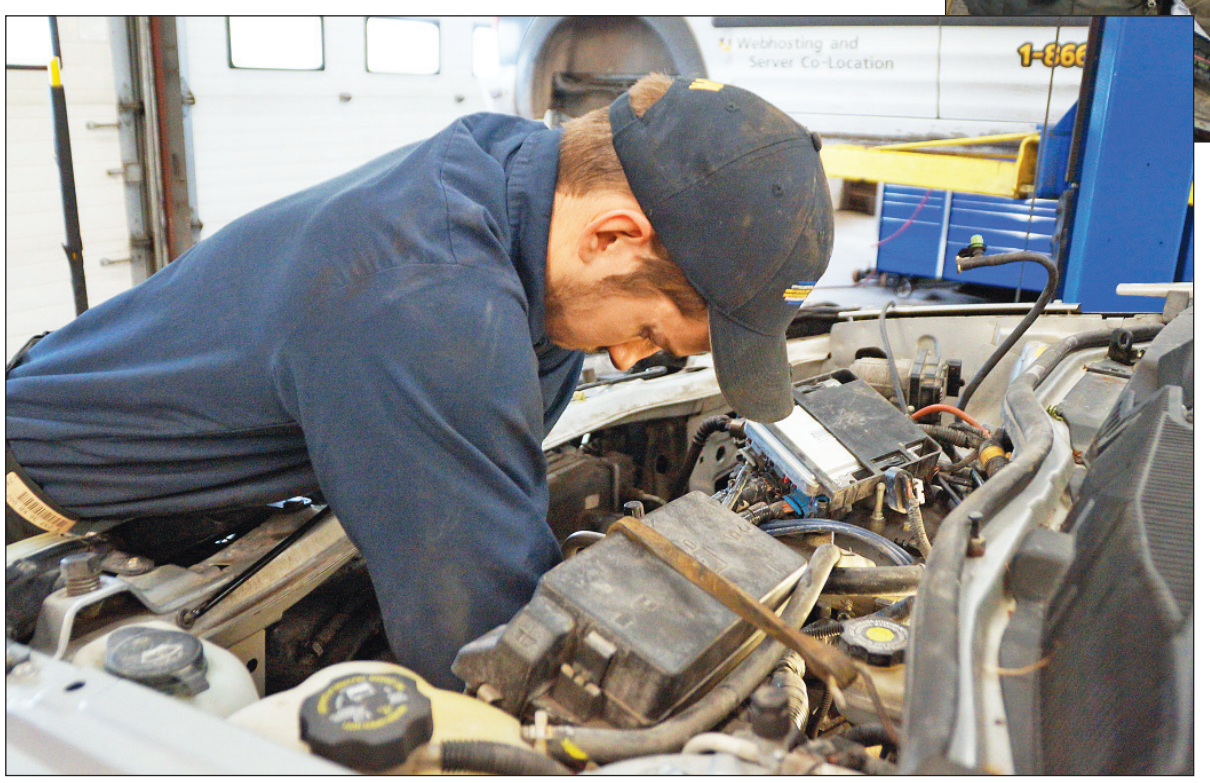
***Right:*** *Troy Wilson, owner of Troy Wilson Automotive, removing the lugnuts before a tire rotation.*

***Far right:*** *Chris Merkley (left) and Brent Crowder, mechanics at Pinkus Tire in Williamsburg, adding air into one of the tires.*





*Kyle Buell, mechanic at Winchester Automotive Services, went deep under the hood during this vehicle inspection. Photos – Guy*



*Nich McLean, mechanic at Precision Diesel in Winchester, working on the engine of one of the many cars brought into the shop.*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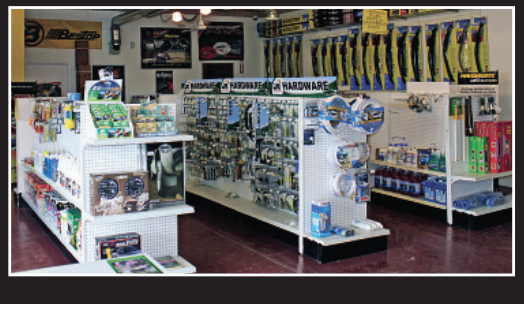

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# Shop TALK

***Press intern Nina Guy takes a look at the work going on at some of our local automotive service centres.***



***Left:***
*Doug Kelly, owner of Kelly's Garage and Towing in Winchester, working on one of the vehicles brought into the automobile shop.*

***Below:***
*John Montgomery, mechanic at W.J.L. Boyd & Sons OK Tire in Winchester, tightening lugnuts.*





***Left:***
*Steve Lacey, mechanic at D & J Motors in Winchester, removing the dashboard of one of the cars.*

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# Warning signs a tire is about to go flat

Few drivers will be fortunate enough to go their entire driving lives without encountering at least one flat tire. Flat tires range from the inconvenient flats, which may interrupt a road trip or make drivers late for work or an appointment, to more dangerous blowouts, which can compromise the safety of drivers, their passengers and anyone else on the road when the tire gives out.

But as inconvenient or dangerous as flats or blowouts can be, they also can be prevented more often than not. Tires often produce warning signs that a flat or blowout is about to emerge, so drivers who want to avoid such unfortunate developments can inspect their tires for the following signs.



*Routinely checking tire pressure and inflating underinflated tires is one way drivers can reduce their risk of flat tires and blowouts.*

• **Varying wear:** Tires should exhibit the same type of wear. The wear on front tires and back tires may differ, but one front tire should have the same amount of wear as the other and the same goes for the back tires. Uneven tread on tires indicates that the tire with more wear could be about to go out.

• **Worn tread:** Even drivers who know little about cars can typically recognize when tire tread has worn down to the point where the tire is a safety risk. But drivers who are unsure can employ the quarter test. Insert a quarter into a tire tread groove with the caribou nose down and facing you. If the tire tread covers the tip of the nose, it's probably adequate. If you can see the tip of the nose, it's time to bring your vehicle in. Perform this test on each of your vehicle's four tires.

• **Low pressure:** Drivers who do not routinely check their tire pressure are more likely to endure a flat or blowout than those who regularly make sure their tires are at the manufacturer-recommended pressure, which can be found in a vehicle owner's manual or by calling the tire manufacturer or visiting their website. An underinflated tire is under stress that can cause the tire to blowout. In addition, poorly inflated tires force engines to work harder, which negatively affects a car's fuel efficiency.

• **Vibration:** A car that vibrates excessively may do so because tires are damaged. Poor suspension is another cause of excessive vibration. Whatever is behind a car that is vibrating, drivers should immediately take the car to their mechanic for an inspection.

• **Physical damage to the tire:** Sometimes tires exhibit physical damage like bulges or cuts, and such signs could mean a flat tire or blowout is just around the corner. Tires that exhibit such physical damage need to be replaced immediately.

Flat tires and blowouts can prove both scary and inconvenient. Drivers who want to avoid such problems should routinely inspect their tires for indicators that a flat or blowout is likely to occur.

# Is it a BEV or PHEV?

Battery-powered passenger vehicles are becoming increasingly popular as automakers respond to progressively more stringent greenhouse gas regulations and consumer demand for greener buying options. Electric vehicles are enormously attractive to green-minded consumers who want to lower their carbon footprint by eliminating or reducing their reliance on fossil fuels.

Here's some information about battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs).

• BEVs and PHEVs use electric drive systems to achieve greater operating efficiency than conventional internal combustion engine vehicles.

• BEVs are all electric and require that their batteries be recharged in order to operate, while PHEVs supplement the electric drive using a comparatively small internal combustion engine to increase the driving range.

• BEVs use an electric propulsion system for all phases of driving with 100 per cent of their propulsion coming from a zero-emission electric motor, powered by electricity from large on-board battery packs that can be recharged from the electric power grid or an external electricity source.

• PHEVs use both an electric motor and an internal combustion engine. The PHEVs on-board battery packs can also be recharged using electricity from the electric power grid, or an external electricity source, enabling them to operate solely on electric power or a combination of electric and gasoline power, depending on the design, for the first few kilometres. Once the batteries are depleted to a certain level, the vehicle automatically starts the internal combustion engine to propel the vehicle and may cycle between the two different operating modes depending on driving conditions and the vehicle design. For example, the Chevrolet Volt, which was the first production PHEV on the Canadian market, has an all-electric range of about 65 kilometres and a total range of about 580 kilometres when you include the gasoline-powered engine.

There are a number of fuel-efficient technologies available in new vehicles these days. If this is something you want to explore further, including more information about BEVs and PHEVs, check out the Natural Resources Canada webpage "Technology and Fuel Efficiency" at www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/transportation/cars-light-trucks/buying/7497.

*— News Canada*

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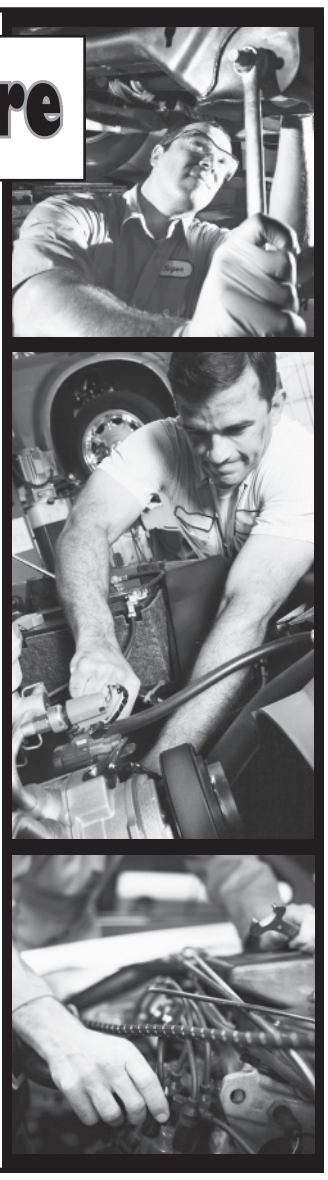


# Five tips for buying a fuel-efficient vehicle

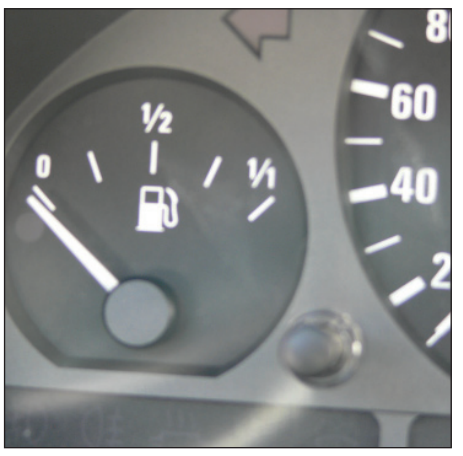
Everyone needs a break these days and that includes saving money when you buy a new vehicle. Think about buying the most fuel-efficient one that meets your needs to save money at the pumps and also maximizes savings over the long haul. The money you save could go towards that dream vacation or big screen TV that you have always wanted.

The experts at Natural Resources Canada have put together these tips to help you make an informed decision:

**1. Do some research before you leave home –** The NRCan website, www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca, has a fuel consumption ratings search tool to help you compare the fuel consumption ratings of various years, makes and models of vehicles.

**2. Check out the EnerGuide Label –** Compare vehicles using the EnerGuide label that is found on all new cars and light trucks. The label shows city and highway fuel consumption ratings and the estimated annual fuel cost for that particular vehicle model.

**3. Choose a vehicle that fits your everyday needs in terms of size and power –** Put some serious thought into your space and cargo needs – do you really need a minivan when a compact would do? Passenger cars with smaller engines tend to deliver better fuel consumption than those with larger engines.



**4. Two-wheel drive vs. four-wheel drive –** The added weight and drive train losses you get with four-wheel and 'all-wheel' drive systems increase fuel consumption. Although all-wheel drive can offer better traction when accelerating under slippery conditions, it doesn't assist in braking; there is no substitute for safe driving habits.

**5. Think about your extras –** Accessories and power features can be a big drag on an engine, increasing fuel consumption. How much do you really need all those gizmos? Are they worth the increased fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions?

By following these tips and doing your homework, you can watch your savings add up and your greenhouse gas emissions go down.

*— News Canada*

# Properly maintained headlights vastly improve driver safety

Many elements of vehicle maintenance become second nature to drivers. Oil changes, routine checkups and periodic vehicle inspections can keep cars running smoothly and safely on the road. But few drivers remember to maintain their headlights, a potentially dangerous oversight that can compromise the safety of drivers and their fellow motorists.

Old or poorly maintained headlights can be hazardous for a variety of reasons. When coupled with inclement weather, outdated or dirty headlights can make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians and other vehicles. In addition, drivers who struggle to see at night may find their visibility further compromised by older headlights that don't provide the light they need to navigate their vehicles safely once the sun has gone down.

Because headlights can have such a dramatic impact on driver safety, it's important that motorists take the following steps to maintain their headlamps.

**• Recognize when bulbs start to dim.** As headlight bulbs age, their light output is reduced by the effects of humidity, electrical resistance, filament fatigue, and general usage. The result is dim bulbs that make it difficult for motorists young and old to see when driving at twilight and at night, when a driver's visual acuity is naturally reduced by 70 percent. Drivers should pay attention to how their headlights are performing, replacing any bulbs that are no longer providing adequate light.

## Steps to improve visibility

**• Don't just replace but upgrade your headlight bulbs.** Bulbs that have started to dim need to be replaced, but auto enthusiasts or maintenance-savvy drivers know they can upgrade their bulbs when replacing them. Industry experts recommend replacing headlamp bulbs every two years, and replacing them in pairs to make sure the vehicle's lighting is equally balanced. But rather than sticking with the bulbs provided by the car maker, look for a bulb that makes it easier to see at night and during hazardous conditions.

Numerous studies have shown that roughly one-third of auto accidents occur at night, when driver visibility is most compromised. So in addition to maintaining their headlights, drivers should take the following steps to improve their visibility.

**• Keep wiper blades fresh.** Wiper blades should be changed every three months, as they can become brittle over time and, depending on their frequency of use, can wear out, especially on older vehicles with pitting on the windshield. When inspecting the wiper blades, remember to inspect your windshield washer as well, making sure that the washers are operating effectively and that the washer fluid basin has been refilled.

**• Avoid hanging items that compromise visibility.** Many drivers like to hang trinkets, fuzzy dice or personal photos from their vehicles' rearview mirrors. Avoid hanging such items, which can prove distracting and restrict your view of the road.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# How efficient are conventional internal combustion engines?

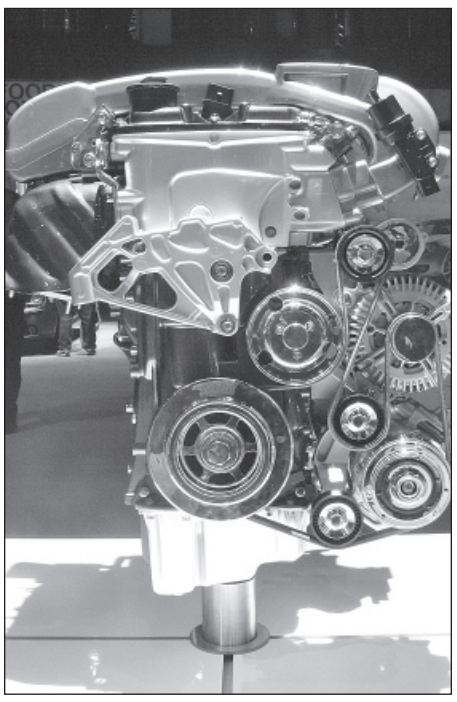
Most of the vehicles we drive today are powered by internal combustion engines. These engines produce power by burning fuel with air in the engine cylinder, which when it is ignited, generates energy used to push the piston downward and ultimately to propel the vehicle forward.

Sounds logical except internal combustion engines aren't able to convert all of the chemical energy in the fuel into forward motion; in fact, only about one-quarter of the energy in the fuel reaches the wheels to propel your vehicle. The rest of the energy is lost primarily as heat through the engines cooling system and exhaust and smaller amounts of energy are lost through engine friction, pumping the air into and out of the engine, combustion inefficiencies, drivetrain losses and parasitic losses.

Curious about where all that energy is going?

• **Engine losses –** about 66 percent. Losses happen as a result of engine friction, pumping air into and out of the engine and wasted heat, which is the largest element of engine energy losses.

• **Drivetrain losses –** about 5 percent. The drivetrain transfers energy from the engine to the wheels through several components such as a driveshaft, transmission, differential and axle. Friction in the gears and bearings causes energy losses to occur.



• **Parasitic losses –** about 4 percent. Things like the water pump and alternator draw power from the engine.

Operating your vehicle at peak efficiency is part science and part common sense. The bottom line is that vehicles today are more fuel-efficient than ever before but how we drive them affects the money we pay at the pumps. Check out the Natural Resources Canada website at www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca for some fuel-efficient driving tips.

*— News Canada*

# Protect your car's resale value

The following are some ways motorists can protect the resale value of their vehicles from the moment the dealer tosses them the keys.

• **Keep all maintenance records.** New cars typically do not require much maintenance. But drivers should keep records of all work and maintenance done on their vehicles, even if that work does not extend beyond routine tuneups or oil changes. Keeping maintenance records shows prospective buyers you prioritized taking care of the vehicle over the years.

• **Don't overlook looks.** Looks can be deceiving, but new car buyers who eventually plan to sell their vehicles should do all they can to keep the car looking as new as it did the day it was first driven off the dealership lot. Much like homeowners benefit when selling a home with curb appeal, a car that looks good gives buyers the impression that it was well taken care of. But a dirty car or one with lots of dings and dents is a red flag to preowned car buyers.

• **Keep a clean interior.** New car owners typically maintain some strict rules with regard to food and beverages in their vehicles. After all, no one wants their brand new car to succumb to stains or spills. But the longer drivers have a car the more lax they tend to become with regard to allowing food and drinks into their cars, and that can ultimately hurt the resale value of the vehicle. Maintain a clean interior whether you just bought the car or have driven it for a few years. Much like an impressive exterior leaves a lasting impression, a clean interior that has not succumb to coffee stains or muddy boots is more likely to impress buyers than a car with an interior that has seen better, cleaner days.

• **Drive defensively.** It's not just what you do to a car but how you drive the car that can affect its resale value. Driving defensively reduces your risk of accident, and an accident-free preowned vehicle is a top priority for potential buyers. But driving defensively also reduces wear and tear on your vehicle, as over time constant stop-and-go, aggressive driving takes its toll on vehicle engines and other components.

Resale value may not be foremost on the minds of new car owners, but the earlier buyers begin to factor resale value into their car-care routines, the more they will benefit down the road.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# Find the repair shop that's right for you!

Like a visit to the dentist, a trip to your local garage for maintenance can be anxiety provoking. But just as regular trips to the dentist are important to your oral health, regular trips to your automotive service provider are important to the health and safety of your car.

So how can you reduce that anxiety and ensure a positive experience? Educate yourself about service and maintenance requirements for your vehicle, be prepared to ask questions, and then find the service provider that is right for you.

The Automotive Industries Association (AIA) of Canada recently conducted a series of consumer focus groups in partnership with the Canadian Automobile Association and found that consumers feel there is an imbalance in information when it comes to automotive repair. In short, Canadians feel that automotive service technicians possess all the knowledge when it comes to maintenance and repairs, while consumers know very little.

"Walking into a situation where you are relying almost entirely on someone else's knowledge and expertise can be stressful," says Marc Brazeau, president and CEO, AIA Canada. "Having the right information beforehand is empowering and gives you more confidence in your decision-making without the added stress we often face when dealing with unexpected repairs."

AIA works to level the information imbalance through its consumer education program, Be Car Care Aware (BCCA) which informs Canadians about the importance of service and repair. The program was re-launched as part of its 10th anniversary celebrations this past October.

"Through the Be Car Care Aware program, we provide critical tools and resources you need before you arrive at the shop," explains Brazeau. "This includes information on how to select a service provider you can trust and rely upon."

With more than 22,000 automotive service outlets across the country, competition in the service and repair industry is stiff, which means you have options when it comes to finding a trustworthy provider in your area. Although it may seem risky to move to a new service centre when you are familiar with your current provider, if you don't have confidence in their advice or work it's well worth making the switch.

Sandra Crozier-McKee, president and CEO of BBB (Better Business Bureau) Serving Southern Alberta and East Kootenay, says with cold, Canadian winter weather, it's crucial for consumers to find trustworthy technicians to take care of their automotive needs.

"As with any major financial decision, it's best to check before you buy," she says. "We rely heavily on our vehicles, especially in the winter, so checking with BBB for a trustworthy service provider will help drivers make informed decisions before committing."

Here are five tips to help you choose the right service provider:

**1. Ask around –** Poll your family, friends and colleagues about which service provider(s) they trust (or don't!) with their cars. People who are happy with their shop are typically more than happy to recommend it.

**2. Read online reviews –** Search a shop that you're considering online to see what other customers say about the service. Better Business Bureau reviews are unbiased and vetted for accuracy.

**3. Get it in writing –** Ask a few shops for written quotes that include all costs (i.e. parts and labour), as well as the expected completion date, and compare them. Keep in mind that quality service, quality parts and technician training do have a cost, so beware of shops that offer significant discounts.

**4. Ask about guarantees –** A good shop will offer warranty on the work it completes as a customer satisfaction guarantee, so be sure to ask about warranties when you shop around.

**5. Look for customer information and education –** Quality service in the automotive servicing industry means a commitment to educating customers. Your service technician or counter-person should clearly explain what needs to be done on your vehicle and why – even showing you in the bay if necessary or showing you old parts versus new.

Don't put off regular vehicle maintenance and repairs because you are leery of your garage. Visit www.becarcareaware.ca for information on how to maintain your vehicle, including a detailed section on selecting a service technician.

To find a BBB accredited shop in your area, visit www.bbb.org

*The Automotive Industries Association (AIA) of Canada is the national trade association representing the automotive service and repair industry in Canada. AIA's mandate is to promote, educate and represent members in all areas that impact the growth and prosperity of the industry. To learn more, please visit www.aiacanada.com.*

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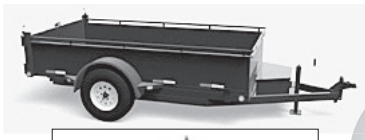

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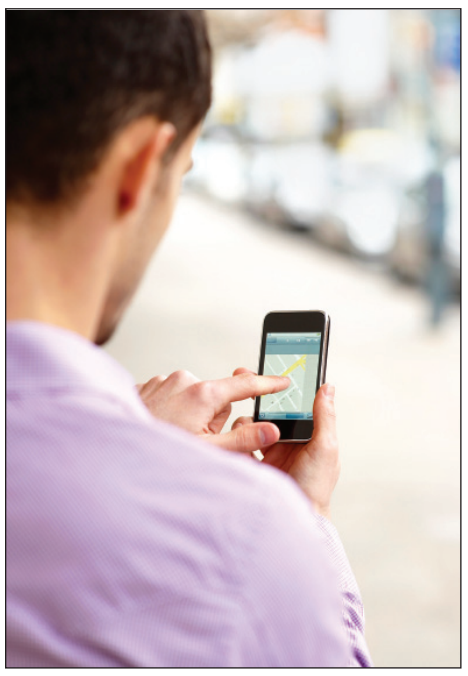


# Great apps car owners can use

Smartphones are a convenient tool that few people can now imagine living without. Smartphone-toting moms and dads know they always have a camera on hand to take quick snaps of their youngsters, while foodies rely on their smartphones to find nearby restaurants or read reviews of eateries while out on the town. But drivers also can benefit from smartphones thanks to the following apps.

• **Waze:** Commuters who download Waze to their smartphones may wonder how they ever navigated their daily treks to the office without this useful app, which allows drivers to share real-time traffic and road information with their fellow motorists. Drivers can use Waze to save time and gas money and make their commutes less stressful. Drivers who use Waze can actively report accidents and find the least expensive gas prices posted by fellow drivers in their community.

• **GasBuddy:** While fuel prices dipped in late 2014 and stayed low into 2015, today's drivers are still conditioned to find the most affordable gas prices around. The GasBuddy app makes it easy to do just that, as users can share gas prices in their community, which fellow drivers can then peruse to find the most affordable filling stations along their driving routes. Drivers can even enter their city, ZIP code or postal code to find the cheapest gas in their vicinity.

• **CAA:** Stuck on the side of the road? Flat tire? Dead battery? With the CAA App, your next roadside request is at your fingertips. Features of the app include: instant battery quotes; find CAA approved auto repair services locations; find gas prices near you, by address, city, or point of interest; speak to a CAA Insurance Agent or buy travel insurance; use a TripTik® map to view the CAA rewards partners nearby for member-exclusive savings; book a hotel, flight or car rental; reach a CAA travel consultant; and see where your CAA service vehicle is in relation to your location or the estimated time of arrival using service tracker.

• **Insurance:** Nearly every auto insurance provider now offers its own mobile app to policy holders. Such apps may allow drivers to pay their bills, view their insurance identification cards, peruse their policies, arrange for roadside assistance and report claims among other things. These apps put your auto insurance provider at your fingertips and can make it much easier to manage your policy.

## Online eco-driving course could save you $2,500

In just 25 minutes, you can learn driving techniques to help you save as much as 25 per cent in fuel costs, which could add up to approximately $2,500 in savings over five years, according to the experts who run the online eco-Driving course at www.ecodrivingonline.ca/home.htm.

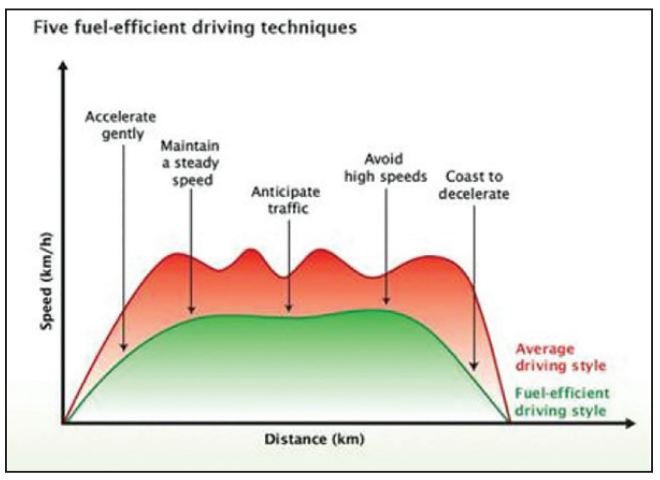
The course was developed by the Learning Products and Solutions group at Stantec Consulting Ltd. in Ottawa with support from Natural Resources Canada.

The eco-Driving online course will show both new and experienced drivers:

• How to reduce their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while saving money on fuel and vehicle maintenance;
• Five eco-efficient driving techniques;
• Three travel management tips;
• Four vehicle performance/ maintenance tips;
• How to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The course takes only 25 minutes to complete and administrators are currently offering it free to the first 2,500 participants who register.

*— News Canada*




## The fab five driving habits you simply must adopt

Are you saving up for some new bling? Why not adopt a turn-key solution that starts behind the wheel of your car. Did you know that just by adopting more fuel-efficient driving habits you could cut your consumption by as much as 25 per cent and therefore keep more money in your pocket? Imagine the bling that would bring.

So the next time you head out on the road, adopt these fab five driving techniques:

1. Accelerate gently
2. Maintain a steady speed
3. Anticipate traffic
4. Avoid high speeds
5. Coast to decelerate

By driving green, you could save hundreds of dollars at the pump each year and stay on trend. You could also avoid costly speeding tickets, bumper repairs, insurance hikes and even prevent unnecessary wear on your vehicle. What better proof is there that conserving energy and the planet can be simple, safe, cost-effective and bling-worthy?

You can find more tips for eco-driving on the Natural Resources website at www.vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca and www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/transportation/cars-light-trucks/buying/16223.

*— News Canada*

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5. Inspect front and rear brakes and clean as required
6. Check steering and suspension components

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