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As men and women age, various factors may affect their ability to drive. In addition to issues with memory, seniors may have failing eyesight and physical limitations, and their reaction time may slow down. In such instances, seniors’ ability to safely operate a motor vehicle may be questioned.

Age alone is not a reliable measure of driving ability, but many of the issues that affect one’s ability to safely drive a vehicle tend to appear as men and women near their golden years. Losing the ability to safely operate an automobile can greatly reduce a person’s independence. That is why periodic driver evaluations may be met with some reluctance. Aging men and women who don’t want to avoid potential conflicts with concerned family members can take their own steps to ensure they maintain their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Schedule a driving safety evaluation

When drivers’ abilities to operate a motor vehicle become suspect, a thorough evaluation should be scheduled. The evaluation should not be handled by a family physician or family member, but by an unbiased third party like a Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist. This is a therapist who has special certification to assist people with disabilities, including older adults, with driving. They can help individuals with adaptive equipment or techniques if driving issues stem from something that can be addressed.

Figure out if the car “fits” the individual

A program called CarFit can help drivers assess if their car is suited to their abilities. A team of trained technicians and/or health professionals work with participants to ensure their vehicles are equipped for maximum safety and comfort. A properly adjusted vehicle is as important as one’s cognitive and physical abilities. Adjustments can include mirror placement, good foot positioning and sitting at the proper distance from the steering wheel.

Figure out if the car “fits” the individual

Help senior drivers maintain independence
Reduce fuel consumption to save money, help the planet

Reducing fuel costs is foremost on the minds of many drivers. Myriad costs are associated with owning an automobile, many of which are within a driver’s control. For instance, safe drivers are likely to spend less on auto insurance than drivers with a history of traffic violations or accidents, while drivers who purchase a vehicle with a high safety rating will likely spend less to insure that vehicle than they would a sports car.

One of the costs associated with driving that some drivers may mistakenly feel is beyond their control is the cost of fuel. Drivers might not be able to control the price at the pump, but there are many ways drivers can spend less on fuel, helping them save money and helping the environment along the way.

Emphasizing efficiency

Making a vehicle more efficient is a great way to save money at the pump. But drivers don’t need to get under the hood or have a mechanic’s understanding of automobiles to make their cars more efficient. In fact, a few minor adjustments is all it takes to make a car more efficient and save drivers, regardless of their mechanical inclinations, money at the filling station.

• Adequately inflate tires. Tires that are not properly inflated increase drag on a vehicle, which then consumes more fuel to operate at full capacity. Check the driver’s manual for the manufacturer’s recommended tire pressure, and check the tire pressure frequently to ensure your car isn’t working harder than it needs to be.

• Clear out the trunk. A car filled with clutter is carrying unnecessary weight, making it harder to accelerate and consuming more fuel than it should be. Clear out the trunk and anything inside the vehicle that you don’t need.

• Open the windows at lower speeds. Air conditioning consumes lots of fuel, and many auto experts suggest rolling down the windows when driving at lower speeds. When you begin driving a little faster, roll the windows up and turn down the windows when driving at lower speeds. When you consume more fuel, and many auto experts suggest rolling the trunk and anything inside the vehicle that you don’t need.

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Gas

From page 4

fuel consumption, it will earn you some money back on your fuel purchases.

• Don’t pay more for your gas than you need to. Some drivers might feel as though putting a high-octane fuel in their vehicles will improve the vehicle’s performance. But that’s not the case. A high-octane fuel in a car that’s built for a low-octane fuel won’t improve the car’s performance or its gas mileage. Only purchase the fuel the owner’s manual recommends. For many new vehicles, that means 87-octane, or “regular,” fuel, which is typically the most affordable.

Driving habits can also impact how much fuel you’re consuming. Driving habits can be hard to change, but drivers who start driving with a mind toward safety and reducing fuel consumption can take steps to do just that.

• Don’t speed. High-speed speeds more than 60 miles per hour significantly reduce fuel efficiency. Estimates suggest a car traveling at 60 miles per hour uses 20 percent less fuel than a vehicle traveling at 75 miles per hour. Toxic emissions, including carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides, also increase when vehicles travel more than 60 miles per hour.

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Campers’ guide to RV care and maintenance

Sometimes referred to as recreational vehicles, travel trailers or campers, RVs are popular. According to the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, RV shipments through February 2017 totaled 73,287 units. This represents an increase of 8.6 percent from the same period in 2016. In fact, RV shipments have increased for seven consecutive years.

This popularity might be driven by the affordability and convenience of vacationing in an RV. Essentially hotels or homes on wheels, campers provide many amenities in a compact package. Sometimes referred to as recreational vehicles, travel trailers or campers, RVs are popular. According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, RV shipments through February 2017 totaled 73,287 units. This represents an increase of 8.6 percent from the same period in 2016. In fact, RV shipments have increased for seven consecutive years. This popularity might be driven by the affordability and convenience of vacationing in an RV. Essentially hotels.

According to the recreational vehicle advice gurus at Do It Yourself RV, RVs require all of the standard maintenance of a car plus much more. Schedule oil changes and filter replacements. To keep the hardworking engine of an RV operating at optimal capacity, oil changes and air filter replacements should be conducted at regular intervals and in adherence to the owner’s manual. Such maintenance prevents engines from seizing.

Keep it covered. RV roofs are susceptible to sun and environmental damage. Store the RV under a steel RV carport or cover it using a product specifically designed for an RV. Remember to routinely inspect and clean the roof and damage the generator’s internal components. Run the generator if the RV has not been used for awhile. Be sure to change the oil and filter of the generator regularly as well.

Drivers may haul trailers for a variety of reasons. Some may have trailers on vacation, while others may do so when moving to a new home. Regardless of why drivers tow, it’s important to keep certain things in mind before hitching up, especially for those drivers who little or no experience towing.

1. Use the right hitch. Novices may purchase an incorrectly sized hitch, not immediately recognize if they have purchased an incorrectly sized hitch, but that might become apparent when the trailer is detached during a ride.

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2. Make sure the trailer is level. When attached to a vehicle, trailers should be level. Trailers that do not appear level or those that seem to be rising up and down on otherwise flat roadways should be inspected if not brought to the attention of a mechanic.

3. Drive more carefully. Discomfort or inexperience may propel many drivers to be extra careful when towing a trailer, but even drivers with significant experience towing should keep greater distance between their vehicles and other cars and trucks sharing the road. That’s because braking takes longer for heavier vehicles.

4. Practice turns. Turning is complicated when towing a trailer. Beginning a turn later can help drivers avoid having their trailers clip curbs, a potentially sticky situation that can cause trailers to flip over.

5. Avoid reversing when possible. Many people towing trailers for the first time and even some drivers with significant experience towing have difficulty going in reverse. Avoiding situations that require putting vehicles in reverse is ideal for novices. Those who think they cannot avoid going in reverse should practice their technique in empty parking lots before hitting the road, even hiring an instructor to help them, if necessary.

Periodically run the generator. RV generators shouldn’t go unused for too long. Gasoline has a short shelf life, and generators shouldn’t go unused for too long.

With proper maintenance, they can run like new for years. Your vehicle owner’s manual may suggest which size hitch to use. If not, consult with a representative at your local auto parts retailer to determine the correct size. To keep the hardworking engine of an RV operating at optimal capacity, oil changes and air filter replacements should be conducted at regular intervals and in adherence to the owner’s manual.

Lubricate joints and slide-out rails. Avoid rust and corrosion by spraying moving parts with a lubricant spray. 10W can be a home away from home while vacationing or touring the country. When checking for leaks, look under the vehicle and check fluid. Wait for the RV to cool down before checking fluids.

As the engine run cooler in hot temperatures, but it also helps the engine run cooler in hot temperatures. Wait for the RV to cool down before checking fluids.

Periodically run the generator. RV generators shouldn’t go unused for too long. Gasoline has a short shelf life, and after time it can break down, condense and damage the generator’s internal components. Run the generator if the RV has not been used for awhile. Be sure to change the oil and filter of the generator regularly as well.

Drain and clean water and waste systems. Water systems can benefit from being drained periodically and flushed with clean, fresh water. The disposal waste system needs to be drained as indicated in the owner’s manual.

- Check for leaks. Look under the RV and/or tow vehicle for any signs of leaks. Repair leaks promptly. Transmission fluid leaks can lead to vehicle fires. When checking for leaks, check fluid levels to ensure they’re at the proper level. This includes engine oil, transmission fluid, power steering fluid, windshield washer fluid, and brake fluid.

- Check radiator coolant. Radiator coolant is another important fluid to check. Antifreeze protects the engine in cold temperatures, but it also helps the engine run cooler in hot temperatures. Wait for the RV to cool down before checking fluids.

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Prepare now for winter driving

Now’s the time to get your car ready for the demands placed on it in the coming winter months. Especially in rain, sleet, freezing rain, and maybe snow, you’ll want your vehicle to start and run reliably. And you’ll want your driving experience to be as safe and comfortable as possible. Here are some things to check to make your winter driving safer and more secure (www.BoschAutoParts.com).

Start

Most important, you’ll want your car to start reliably every time. “Weekly tune-ups are not what they used to be, your vehicle still needs to have new spark plugs installed periodically,” said Mark Wilkinson, Group Product Manager, Spark Plugs for Robert Bosch LLC. Bosch is the company that invented the first commercially-viable high voltage spark plug more than a century ago.

Installing new spark plugs will help assure quick starts even in very cold weather, when battery power can be severely compromised. According to Wilkinson, “Most drivers feel that the original spark plugs performed well and lasted quite a while. Our Bosch Iridium is the replacement spark plug most like the Original Equipment (OE) plugs used in many late-model cars. Bosch Iridium has optimized spark projection in the combustion chamber and uses a fine wire electrode design for superior ignitability and performance. It is an excellent replacement plug for any car using older-technology spark plugs.”

Look

Visibility is critical to safe driving, and it’s doubly important when snow, sleet, and ice obstruct vision. For that reason, safer visibility in extreme winter driving conditions demands the best wiper blades you can buy, and Bosch’s Senior Product Manager for wiper blades, Makoto Takatsuka, said that Bosch ICON(TM) wiper blades provide a cleaner wipe and provide up to 40 percent longer life than other premium beam blades in the market. Takatsuka added, “ICON’S exclusive tension spring arcing technology creates a custom fit that’s tailored to the curvature of both the driver and passenger sides of the windshield of each vehicle, unlike other blades that try to accommodate different curvatures with a single blade design. Such a compromise just can’t provide the clean, consistent wipe offered by Bosch ICON’s patented innovative design.”

Listen

Certainly you should listen to the advice of your trusted repair shop when it comes to proper main- tenance of your vehicle. Your mechanic knows your car and its history, and is best qualified to recommend needed parts and service, particularly if your shop is part of the Bosch Car Service network (www.BoschService.com).

According to Michael Lippman, Concept Manager for this network, shops earning this distinction must meet strict standards for technician training, shop equipment, and customer relations, and be able to diagnose and troubleshoot the most advanced electronic safety and engine management systems. Keep your car ready to beat the cold!
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