



CAR CARE

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ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE MORNING JOURNAL

THE MORNING JOURNAL

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- **Stock up on vehicle breakdown supplies**
- **How to maintain a car that's rarely driven**
- **How to effectively and safely sanitize a car**
- **When will self-driving cars hit the road?**





4 factors to consider to maintain winter safety

Many changes are to be expected as fall gives way to winter. Temperatures drop for much of the country, and depending on where one lives, snow, wind and ice are to be expected.

As beautiful as snow-covered landscapes can be, winter presents unique hazards, notably slippery roads and surfaces. Chilly temperatures also can put people at risk if they spend prolonged periods outdoors unprotected.

According to the insurance company Carsurance, more than 156,000 crashes occur annually due to icy roads. Roughly 17 percent of all vehicle crashes happen in winter conditions. Winter hazards are not exclusive to driving, however. That means winter safety involves a consideration of a host of factors.

1. Changing visibility

While slippery surfaces may contribute to some accidents, visibility can quickly change with winter weather. Blowing snow can contribute to whiteout conditions. In addition, fog can be hazardous to drivers, aviators and mariners and contributes to thousands of travel accidents every year, advises the National Weather Service. It's important to slow down, leave plenty of distance, use your low-beam headlights, and

recognize when it may be safest to pull over, such as when visibility is significantly compromised.

2. Snow removal

Shoveling snow or using a snow-blower are common wintertime activities. Yet strenuous levels of activity in cold temperatures could put people at risk of heart attack, particularly if they are not acclimated to physical activity. Always warm up prior to shoveling snow to prepare the body for exercise. Go slowly and take frequent breaks. Avoid twisting and tossing snow over your shoulder, which can contribute to back injuries.

3. Carbon monoxide poisoning

Winter weather means turning up the heat or doing more indoor cooking. Carbon monoxide is produced through the burning of fuel in various forms, including stoves, engines, gas ranges, portable generators, and grills. The National Safety Council says carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless

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Stock up on vehicle breakdown supplies

Unforeseen situations can crop up at any time. Anyone who has had a roadside breakdown in their car understands this. A flat tire or an engine malfunction is something no driver wants to experience, but those with a well-stocked vehicle emergency kit and breakdown strategy can get through most situations rather easily.

A 2017 survey from AAA found that 40 percent of drivers in the United States are not ready to handle a typical roadside emergency breakdown. The organization estimates it helps some seven million motorists get back on the road each summer. A well-equipped roadside emergency kit may help drivers get their vehicles back on the road on their own.

- **First aid kit:** The first aid kit will celebrate its 133rd birthday in 2021. The Johnson & Johnson company began commercializing first aid kits in 1888. Having a first aid kit in the car to treat minor injuries can be helpful in the event of an accident or even after injuring oneself during a breakdown.

- **Fire extinguisher:** Cars are full of various mechanical parts and are susceptible to catching on fire. The National Fire Protection Association says vehicle fire extinguishers need to be rated for Class B and C fires.

- **Jumper cables:** A weak or dead battery is often the culprit in breakdowns. Jumper cables enable drivers to get a charge from another motorist, and may help get a person back on the road quickly. If possible, get a set of cables that also comes with safety gloves and heavy duty clamps, offers Defensive Driving Online, a defensive driving course.

- **Mobile phone/charger:** A mobile phone is essential for calling for assistance, but the phone is only useful if it's charged.

- **Blanket:** Keep a blanket in the trunk or another storage area. Should the vehicle die in cold weather, that blanket can help keep passengers warm until assistance arrives.

- **Basic tools:** Tools like a screwdriver, ratchet set and wrench may enable

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drivers to complete minor repairs. Tools also should include tire-changing gear, such as a jack and lug nut remover.

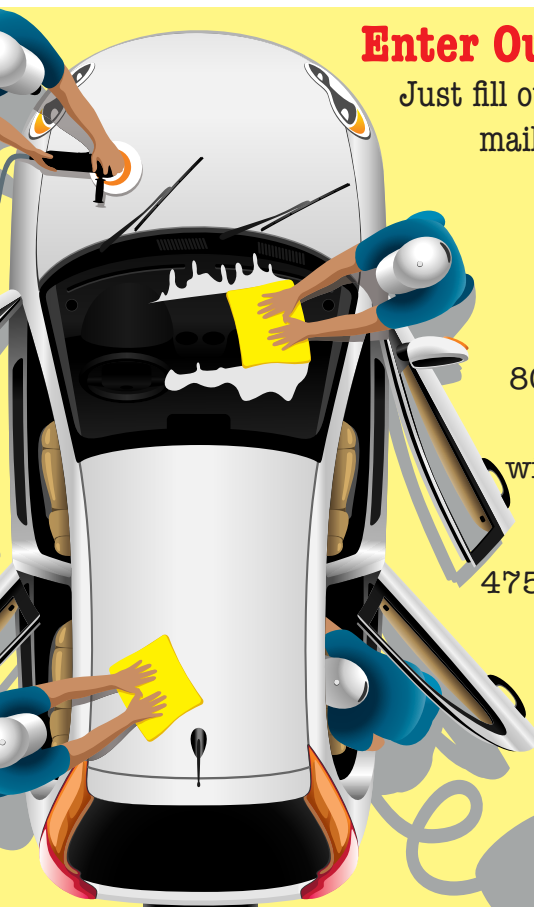
- **Traction aid:** Non-clumping kitty litter or sand can provide the traction needed to get off of a slippery area of roadway.

- **Flashlight:** A flashlight can help keep you visible and able to see your surroundings in dark conditions.

- **Flares:** Should a breakdown occur in the dark, flares can alert other drivers.

- **Snacks and water:** Water and food that stores well, such as emergency rations, granola bars or trail mix, can quell hunger pangs and provide an energy boost while waiting for help.

- **Rope/bungee cords/tarp:** These items can be used in various situations to secure a vehicle.



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How to maintain a car that's rarely driven

Driving habits changed significantly in 2020. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 forced many professionals to work from home full-time. In addition, stay-at-home measures greatly limited how much people could or would travel in their free time. The result was a lot of cars spending a lot of time sitting idly in driveways.

Just because a car is not being driven very much does not mean its owner can forgo vehicle maintenance. Drivers can take these steps to ensure their vehicles stay in shape even as they're primarily staying in the driveway.

- **Adhere to recommended maintenance schedules.** Auto manufacturers typically recommend maintenance schedules based on the number of miles a car is driven or the length of time since its most recent maintenance appointment. "Whichever comes first" may be recommended for fluid changes and routine tuneups, and this rule of thumb should still be

followed. Even if a car has barely hit the road in recent months, its fluids, such as oil, are still aging and still need to be replaced.

- **Turn the car on every so often.** Turning the car on, even if you only intend to let it sit idle in the driveway, keeps the vehicle components lubricated by allowing fluids to cycle their way through the engine. Turning the car on also ensures the battery stays fresh and doesn't die, a lesson many drivers have learned the hard way during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- **Disconnect the battery if necessary.** Drivers who own two vehicles or families who have only been using the family car in recent months can disconnect the batteries from their unused vehicles to prevent corrosion. Corrosion decreases battery life and performance. If drivers notice a white, green or blue covering around the battery terminals, posts or cables, corrosion is likely the culprit and the battery will need to be replaced.

- **Take the car for a spin.** Of course,



driving a vehicle every so often is a great way to keep it running strong. Multi-car families that tend to use the same car to shop for groceries or pick up takeout orders can periodically use

their other car to run such errands.

Cars are sitting idly in driveways more than ever before. Vehicle maintenance must remain a priority even for cars that rarely hit the open road.

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How to effectively and safely sanitize a car

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people live. One readily felt effect was spending more time at home. Vehicles sat idle in driveways and even some automotive insurance providers reduced rates because people were driving much less.

Even with stay-at-home measures in place, people still need to leave their homes to stock up on essentials, such as food or medicine. In other cases, people may have been essential workers who drive for a living, including delivery drivers or health care personnel who were incapable of working from home.

Any time a person goes out in public, he or she runs the risk of contracting viruses. Bacteria and germs may reside on various surfaces, including those inside vehicles.

People want to protect themselves and now are more aware of the importance of frequently cleaning and sanitizing their cars. Keeping a vehicle safe to drive without affecting its

upholstery or electronic components is paramount.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention makes a distinction between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but can lower their numbers. Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. The following are some ways to deeply clean and sanitize a car.

- Wash hands. First and foremost, it is crucial to wash your hands before and after using the car. This can reduce the likelihood of growing ill because of transferred viruses or bacteria.

- Use rubbing alcohol. Solutions that contain 70 percent alcohol are effective against many viruses and bacteria, including coronaviruses, says the CDC. Furthermore, Jeff Stout, Executive Director of Global Innovation at Yanfeng Automotive Interiors, says that, for the most part, nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be cleaned with isopro-

pyl alcohol. Plastic to painted chrome to imitation leather have been tested to ensure they don't degrade when exposed to pure isopropyl alcohol.

- Avoid bleach or hydrogen peroxide. While bleach and peroxide are very effective cleaners and sanitizers, they are likely to damage a car's upholstery, according to Consumer Reports.

- Use soap and water: Experts say that vigorous washing with a soap-and-water solution can be effective against many contaminants because it breaks down the protective envelope that surrounds coronaviruses and other germs to disarm them. Friction also can help to break down germ cells during cleaning.

"You want to do the best with what you have, so even soap and water can chip away at the risk," says Stephen Thomas, M.D., Chief of Infectious Diseases and Director of Global Health at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY.

- Address frequently touched



surfaces. Pay attention to the steering wheel, door handles, buttons, touch-screen displays, shift lever, and more when sanitizing. Each of these items can harbor germs.

Deep-cleaning a vehicle has become a necessity since COVID-19 emerged. Frequently cleaning and sanitizing can help make vehicles safer to operate.

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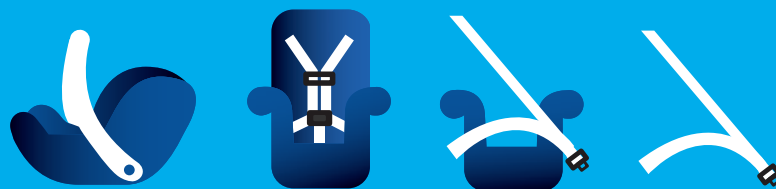
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When will self-driving cars hit the road?

Tech aficionados often know when the latest gizmos and gadgets are slated to hit the market and be made available to consumers. Anticipation tends to build around everything from the latest version of a popular smartphone to a new incarnation of a beloved gaming system. But perhaps no advancement in technology is as highly anticipated as the self-driving car. Industry experts note that the hype around self-driving cars, sometimes referred to as autonomous vehicles, has existed since 2004, when United States military experiments involving self-driving vehicles in the Mojave Desert garnered both attention and excitement. That anticipation and excitement waned as 2004 was left further and further behind in the rearview mirror, but the race to become the first auto manufacturer to build and offer driverless vehicles is still very much on. For example,

in 2018 General Motors indicated its intent to make a fleet of self-driving taxis available in San Francisco by 2020. That did not come to fruition, though other auto manufacturers, notably Tesla, have indicated they have their eyes on potentially offering autonomous taxis in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic complicated, and likely delayed, the arrival of self-driving automobiles, though it remains to be seen just how much the pandemic affected the arrival of driverless vehicles. A recent report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance noted that many auto manufacturers who have worked on self-driving technology had initially set their sights on deployment in 2021. However, lab closures and social distancing measures enacted in response to the pandemic may have made it highly unlikely that 2021 will be the year the world sees its first fleet of self-driving taxis hit the road.

MAINTAIN WINTER SAFETY FROM PAGE 2

gas that can go undetected as it builds up in enclosed spaces. Never warm up the car inside of a contained garage. Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors, and have furnaces, water heaters and other fuel-burning appliances checked and serviced by a qualified technician annually. Be sure that carbon monoxide alarms are on every floor of the home, and take it seriously if the alarm goes off.

4. Black ice

Black ice is a common winter foe. Black ice forms when temperatures rise above freezing during the day, melting any snow on the ground and causing surfaces to become wet. If the temperature drops once more while

the ground is wet, a thin, transparent sheet of ice can form. Black ice also may occur if moisture in the air condenses and forms dew or fog, and then the temperature drops below freezing, says the National Weather Service. Black ice gets its name because it looks black on asphalt roads. However, it also can form on sidewalks and overpasses, or spots shaded by trees or other objects. Slowing down and exercising extreme caution are essential.

Winter is a beautiful season. But it can be just as hazardous as it is awe-inspiring. Taking steps to stay safe in unpredictable conditions is a necessity each winter.



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