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Summer Isn't Over Yet!

Plenty of Time Left for that Road Trip Vacation

SACRAMENTO – Summer is just now heating up and many Californians are ready for that road trip vacation before the “Back to School” commercials begin. Whatever your summer plans – whether it’s a quick jaunt to the lake for the day, or a two week trip to your favorite oasis – the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) urges you to take some precautions before you head out. Taking a little time to plan for unforeseen circumstances now can save you some trouble or, worse yet, costly vehicle repairs, later.

“California is bursting with beautiful places to see and exciting things to do in the summer, so it’s no wonder that so many people choose to travel during this time of year,” said OTS Director Rhonda L. Craft. “However, the best thing you can do to ensure that you and your loved ones have a memorable and safe trip is to prepare yourself and your vehicle now, before a problem occurs.”

OTS has compiled the following tips to help make your summer road trip a safe one:

Plan Your Trip

- Plan, map, and estimate the distance of your trip ahead of time and let others know your plans; know where you’ll stop for breaks, meals, and hotels, too
- Check road conditions, including possible road closures. You can visit www.dot.ca.gov for real time highway conditions

Prepare Your Vehicle

- Check the tires, including the spare, to ensure they're properly inflated
- Inspect the engine, battery, hoses, belts and fluids for wear and adequate levels
- Check that the air conditioning is working properly
- Test all the lights, wipers and clean the windows (inside and out)
- Consider a preventive maintenance inspection by a qualified technician. A few dollars up front can mean peace of mind and safe arrivals, as well as no costly on-the-road repairs and trip interruptions
- Prepare an Emergency Roadside Kit. For a complete list of what to include, visit www.ots.ca.gov/roadsideemergencykit.asp

Safety First and Always

- Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time. Remember: Click It or Ticket
- If you have a flat tire, engine problems or a fender bender, drive out of traffic lanes and off the highway if possible – freeway shoulders are not safe for repair work
- Always plan ahead; use a designated sober driver if you plan on drinking
- If you see suspected drunk drivers, call 911

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Buckle Up Drivers & Passengers

- Parents and caregivers need to use the correct seat for young passengers and be sure the seat is installed properly. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and OTS recommend keeping infants, toddlers and older children in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements. Visit www.ots.ca.gov/Child_Passenger_Safety.asp for assistance with proper car seat installation in advance of your trip
- Keep children 12 and under in the back seat – it's the safest place
 - Older children need to ride in a booster seat from about age four until a seat belt fits them correctly. Be sure to try the 5-Step Test at <http://www.carseat.org/Boosters/630.htm> before graduating from a booster to a seat belt
- Remember that long trips can be particularly tough on your children, especially in the heat – pack plenty of snacks and cold drinks for the road
- Use books, toys, DVDs and video games to keep children occupied so the driver can stay focused
- Stopping along the drive gives everyone a chance to stretch and makes the trip easier. If you have a fussy baby, do not take them out of their car seat while driving to soothe or provide a bottle. If your child needs that level of attention, pull over in a safe place, such as a rest stop

Hyperthermia Alert

- Never, under any circumstances, leave children unattended in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are cracked open
 - Children are prone to serious injury, or even death caused by hyperthermia (heatstroke) from being left unattended in a parked vehicle. Vehicles heat up quickly – even with a window rolled down two inches, even if the outside temperature is just in the low 80s, the temperature inside the vehicle can reach deadly levels in less than a half hour.
- If you see a child unattended in a hot vehicle, call 911. First responders are trained to determine if a child is in trouble
- Place your cell phone, purse or other important items needed at your next stop on the floor in front of a child in the backseat. This triggers adults to see children when they open the rear door and reach for their belongings
- Set your cell phone or calendar reminder to be sure you dropped your child off at day care. Have a plan that if your child is late for day care, you will be called within a few minutes
- Always lock your car and ensure that children do not have access to keys or remote entry devices

Focus on the Road

- Don't text or talk on your cell phone while driving – even hands-free. If you need to use your phone, wait until you stop in safe place, such as a rest stop or parking lot
- Don't program your mobile GPS while you are driving. Either have a passenger do it or stop in a safe place
- Share driving duties with other passengers to avoid fatigue
- Rest – driving while drowsy can be fatal. Even a 30 minute nap can help
- Stop for food or beverages. Avoid eating while driving
- Don't speed, tailgate, change lanes often or otherwise drive aggressively. Let it be a stress free trip.

By planning ahead and following these tips, you can ensure that your summer getaway is a safe one. Join us on Twitter at [@OTS_CA](https://twitter.com/OTS_CA) or “like” us at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS and keep up with the latest traffic safety information. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.OTS.ca.gov.