

Total Housekeeping

- Housekeeping In Your Car -

Have you ever stopped to think about the cleanliness of your car? A clean and properly maintained vehicle is essential for safe and efficient operation.

Maintenance

A properly maintained vehicle is a safe vehicle. A daily 360 degree inspection around the vehicle will help one identify unsafe conditions before major problems develop. Look for problems such as cuts or deterioration in the tire rubber; inadequate tread depth; a dirty windshield; failure of headlights, brake lights, or turn signals; or anything else that could interfere with the operation of the vehicle. Take action to correct small concerns before significant hazards develop. Have your vehicle serviced at least every 5,000 miles, or more often if recommended by the manufacturer (the maintenance schedule specifications are typically detailed in the owner's manual).

Cleanliness

Keeping your vehicle clean inside and out is essential for safe operation. Windows and lights that are kept clean will promote visibility while driving.

Fall has arrived and winter is soon to follow. Remember to completely clean the leaves and snow off your car so that they do not affect your ability to control the vehicle or fly off the car when it is in motion. Foreign substances such as ice, snow, and mud that become dislodged from a vehicle in motion may create an unsafe condition for others. Following heavy snow, remember to leave extra distance behind larger vehicles. The snow that was on top may have turned into ice and could fly off and cause an accident. If off-road driving is necessary, be sure to inspect the vehicle before returning to paved roads. Remove mud and debris from tires and fender areas to the extent possible to reduce the danger to other drivers from debris dropping from your vehicle.

To minimize driving distractions, keep the vehicle interior free from trash and unnecessary gear. Many vehicle accidents involve a distracted driver reaching for an unsecured object in the passenger cabin. Also, if an object rolls under the brake pedal, your ability to stop the vehicle will be limited. Additionally, unsecured objects may become projectiles in the event of an accident and can cause serious injury or even death to vehicle occupants.

Finally, remember to mentally perform "housekeeping of your surroundings" while you drive. Use the Smith Systems Five Keys to Safe Driving[®] to maintain a proper safety cushion around your vehicle.

Resource:

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration,
Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center
(<http://www.tfhrc.gov/>)

