

# ES&H TOOLBOX TALK

COMMUNICATIONS

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## FACTOID:

A properly maintained vehicle is a safe vehicle. You can declutter your vehicle in 15 minutes or less with these quick tips.



## Housekeeping in Your Car

Keeping your vehicle clean inside and out is essential for safe operation. Don't have the time to clean out your vehicle you say?

Relax, you can clean up fast and it won't require a six man NASCAR pit crew to do it either! Follow these simple steps and you'll be clutter free in 15 minutes flat.

### 1. Sort and Toss

Grab a garbage bag and two empty boxes. Start from the front of the car and work your way to the rear, tossing trash into the garbage bag (don't forget to look under the seats). Throw anything that doesn't belong in the car into one box and things that stay in the car (registration, sunglasses) into the other.

### 2. Swipe

Clean the dashboard, doorjambs,

armrests, and steering wheel with cleaning wipes (like Armor-All or baby wipes).

### 3. Shake and Vac

Remove and shake out floor mats. Vacuum the seats and floor. Treat spills and ink spots with hand sanitizer; its high alcohol content zaps stains. Put the mats back in.

### 4. Stow to Go

Now, find homes for the items in the "stay in the car" box. Put maps in large Ziploc bags in the driver's side cubby; manuals and registration documents go in the glove compartment. Ice scrapers, umbrellas, and the like go in the pockets behind the seat. Emergency car supplies like jumper cables and flares go into the trunk; preferably in a toolbox.

### 5. Double Up

Once you've emptied the "stay in the car box", stow it in the trunk for double duty. It can hold items such as hard hats, safety glasses, winter/summer emergency needs like water bottles or blankets, etc.

### 6. Be Prepared

Head off trash accumulation. Fill an empty tissue box with plastic supermarket bags and stash it under the seat to collect trash as it accumulates.

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.

Source: [www.goodhousekeeping.com](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com)

## Vehicle Inspections

A daily 360 degree inspection around the vehicle will help identify unsafe conditions before major problems develop. Take action to correct small concerns before significant hazards develop.

### Things to Look For:

- Cuts or deterioration in the tires
- Inadequate tread depth
- Dirty windshield
- Failure of lights or turn signals
- Secured hood/trunk/gas cap
- Instrument panel warning lights
- Operational windshield wipers
- Fluid levels satisfactory

Operational brakes, seat belts/harnesses, horn and back up alarms.

Now that fall has arrived with winter soon to follow, remember to completely clean the leaves and snow off your car so 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 moving vehicle may create an unsafe condition for others.

Following heavy snow, remember to leave extra distance behind larger vehicles. The snow on top may have turned into ice and could fly off and cause an acci-



dent.

If off-road driving is necessary, be sure to 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's interior free from trash and unnecessary gear. Follow the housekeeping steps above to keep your vehicle free of clutter. Many vehicle accidents involve a distracted driver reaching for an unsecured object in the passenger seat. 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.