



Time to revisit winter motoring safety checklist

Driving in the winter can be a daunting prospect. Good vehicle preparation, knowledge and driving technique are critical. Here are some winter driving tips to ensure the journey is as safe, enjoyable and hazard-free as possible.

Prepare the vehicle

Is your vehicle approaching the time for its next scheduled service? If so, don't put it off. The experts know what to look for – oil levels, wiper blades, filters, battery and tyre pressure amongst other things. Experience shows that if a car is going to fail, it's most likely to do so in the harshest operating conditions – and for most owners, that's the winter months.

Tyres

All the control you have is delivered through four palm-sized patches of rubber where the tyres meet the road. Make sure your tyres are properly inflated. Over-inflation can reduce the gripping action of tyres because the tread will not meet the road surface as it was designed to do. If you're going to be driving in the snow, make sure you have the correct chains and snow tyres (if fitted) – it's now the law that when you use snow tyres, that all four are in fact snow tyres. When



Don't get caught out this winter, wise-up on safe driving tips.

you're driving in wintry conditions it is essential to keep the tyres rolling and not allow them to spin or slide.

Good visibility

Reduced visibility means you have to budget extra time for every drive. Before you hit the road make sure you can see out of every window and mirror. Use a proper windscreen scraper or de-icer to remove ice from your vehicle. Do not use warm water, as this may cause your windscreen

to crack. People often only associate air-conditioning with staying cool during the summer months, but where fitted, it's equally vital for ensuring good visibility during the colder months. Get your system checked. Ensure your lights are working properly and are correctly adjusted. Get them on early and turn them off late; you may choose to keep them on at all times. Remember to keep them dipped when travelling in foggy conditions.

Know what to expect

If you're travelling out of town make sure you know what you're in for. Bridges and overpasses ice over faster than normal roads. Shady areas cool more quickly than areas in full sun. The shadows from large trees, buildings and mountains can cause isolated icy spots.

Accelerating and braking

When accelerating, push the accelerator pedal gently. If you do sense wheel-spin, ease back on the pedal immediately until you feel the tyres grip again. Apply the same principle when braking. Brake gently at first then increase the pedal pressure progressively. You can brake quite hard as long as the application is smooth. If your vehicle is fitted with ABS and/or a Stability Control system, make sure you know what this can do for you.


While having things like a first aid kit and fire extinguisher make good sense at any time of the year, there are things that you might consider especially for the colder months. A torch, perhaps a mat or cover to protect you from the ground should you need to change a tyre, and protective gloves are always a good idea.

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MOTORING FEATURE

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New mechanic on the block

After 20 years of holidaying at Martins Bay, Scott Ockleston has decided the area is the best place to raise his family.

He and wife Kylee, and their two young sons, moved to Kaipara Flats late last year, and Scott is the new owner of Rod Smith Mechanical, in Woodcocks Rd, soon to be Scotty's Repairs and Maintenance.

"I knew of Rod's business through Auto Super Shoppes, a network of premium automotive centres approved by the Motor Trades Association," he says.

With 22 years experience as a mechanic, Scott prides himself on providing customers with fair and honest service.

"If someone thinks they have a problem, they can always come to us for advice or a second opinion.

"Generally, the best advice for any car owner is that servicing is the cheapest form of maintenance. Fixing a small fault can save you thousands of dollars in the long run."

The workshop offers the full range of mechanical services, and recently installed the latest snap-on diagnostic scanner, which enables them to work on the latest vehicles.

If he hasn't got his head under the bonnet of a repair job, chances are Scott is working on one of his own vehicles. A self-declared 'petrol head', he owns a '65 Mustang GT



Scott Ockleston hands over the keys of his Auckland workshop to his mother Annette, who'll be running it from now on.

fastback, a '67 Chev Camaro RS and a '65 Chevy pick-up. His BBQ trailer is made with the backend of a '59 Chev and he is currently building a 32 Ford hot rod.

"It's one of the reasons we bought the land at Kaipara Flats - it's got a big shed."

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Rare cars auctioned

A Queensland car fanatic is being forced to sell his multi-million dollar collection, including Australia's most expensive car, a HSV HRT 427 Monaro coupe reportedly worth \$3.6 million. A collection of 25 rare Holdens, Fords and Chevrolets will go under the hammer on June 7, apparently to pay off debts. Included in the sale will be a 7.0-litre V8 Monaro concept car expected to fetch close to \$1 million.



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Long-running mag celebrates

Radiator magazine, New Zealand's first motor industry trade publication, celebrated its 90th anniversary last month.

From humble beginnings as a black and white journal, printed using letterpress and 'hot metal' typesetting machines, *Radiator* has grown to become one of the longest running trade magazines, and indeed magazines in general, in New Zealand.

Its original publisher was the Motor Garage Proprietors and Cycle Traders Association, now known as the Motor Trade Association, and its purpose was to 'share ideas and knowledge and to raise the status of the motor industry'.

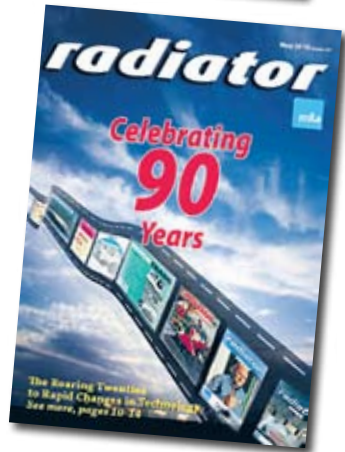
The magazine grew rapidly and attracted industry contributors, quickly becoming a popular advertising medium for motor goods to the trade.

Early editions of the magazine featured many of the same common themes the industry is faces today, from fuel and oil prices, tax and government compliance, to technological changes, lobbying and advocating for member interests amongst regulators along with maintaining high standards of operation and trading behaviour

The first issue was a solid 52 pages, and had a circulation of 600 copies. Today, *Radiator* is distributed to managers and owners of more than 4500 automotive related businesses and has an estimated pass-on readership of 33,000.

Many worldwide disruptions over the past 90 years have threatened *Radiator's* survival, from the Great Depression, World War II resulting in low paper stocks, Stock Market Crash and the world oil crises.

Pictured above: It's not just the cars that have changed in the 90 years since the *Radiator* started publishing. It is the longest running industry publication in NZ.



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Drive on trailers

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Tyre veteran makes another round

Michael Martin's experience in the tyre industry has come full circle.

Mike opened his first tyre store in Warkworth in 1979, in Woodcock Road, going into partnership with Phil Townsend. Then in 1984, P & M Tyres moved to Mill Lane where it operated until being bought out by Beurepair Tyres.

Then last month, exactly 10 years to the day since selling to Beurepair, Mike returned to the tyre business to manage the Mill Lane outlet, now owned by Alan Duff.

"I had to get out in 2000 for the sake of my health," he says. "I had a brain haemorrhage and things were pretty touch and go for awhile."

Originally from Barbados, where

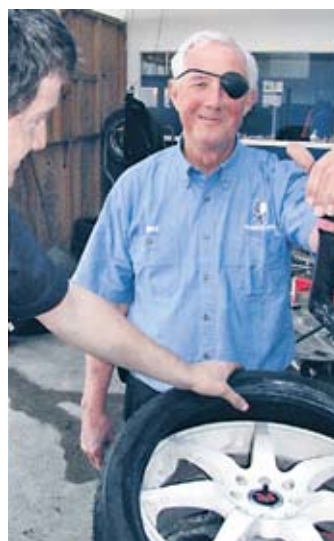
his father ran an import and export business, Mike ran the Whangateau Store for two years when he first moved to NZ.

"When we opened in Woodcock Road, we were the first tyre specialists in Warkworth – up until then, they'd mainly been sold from garages. We stocked cross-fly tyres, mainly Reid Rubber and then Firestone.

"Alan's father Mike actually worked for me for 17 years."

In regard to his present health, Michael says philosophically ... "I'm above ground and vertical, that's good enough for me."

Right: Veteran tyre specialist Mike Martin with apprentice Scott Ingham.



Road speeds reconsidered

Transport staff at Rodney District Council have been asked to revisit the speed limits in Falls Road, Viv-Davie Martin Drive and Francis Place, in Warkworth.

During the adoption of new speed limits on numerous roads around the district, Cr Dave Parker said he believed the submission by resident Sandra Dick needed to be reconsidered. Although no change was recommended to the 100 km/h limit in Falls Road, Viv-Davie and Francis Place were being reduced from 100km/h to 80km/h.

However, Ms Dick said the reductions did not go far enough. She asked for Falls Rd to be reduced to 80km/h and the other two roads to 50km/h.

Cr Parker said the section of Falls Road referred to was a "very dangerous" stretch of road, which was used by children going to school who had to walk on the road because there were no footpaths.

Motorbike toll

The NZ Transport Agency introduced a toll for motorcyclists on the Northern tollway on June 1. Motorcyclists have been exempt since the road opened in January 2009. The toll is \$2 per trip, the same as cars and other light vehicles.

Top apprentices prepare to go head-to-head

The search is on to find the Motor Trade Association (MTA) Apprentice of the Year 2010, and MTA is encouraging automotive businesses from all sectors of the industry to put forward their top apprentices.

The award aims to reward the skills of talented apprentices and employers who are investing in the future and the skills of the automotive industry. This year's competition is expected to be bigger and better than ever, especially

with the merger of the traditional theory based 'Apprentice of the Year' contest with the practical, hands-on 'MTA Apprentice Challenge'.

MTA event coordinator Natalie Price says the competition not only recognises the best in the automotive industry, but it's a great opportunity for apprentices to showcase their talents and fast track their skills and career development.

The competition aims to provide

automotive apprentices with a challenging, but fun and practical competition. Each apprentice will be tasked with a bookwork test and a practical tool off, plus a panel interview. The winner will win a trip to Surfers Paradise to work with Greg Murphy and the Castrol Racing Pit crew, \$2000 cash prize and a potential study grant from MITO.

The deadline for entries is July 30.

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Two of the local motoring industry's elder statesmen, Ian Edmonds (left) and Wayne Mason.

Warkworth paint and panel men stand the test of time

In an era when about half of all small businesses fail in their first three years, Edmonds and Mason Panel and Paint stands out as a notable exception.

For 36 years, the business has operated at 47 Woodcocks Road, in Warkworth, painting and panelbeating cars, fixing glass and windscreens, restoring classic cars and removing vehicle rust.

Business founder Ian Edmonds estimates that the current workshop and purpose-built paint room probably occupy about 10 times the space he started in.

"The original industrial estate was just a line of about five buildings, fronting Woodcocks Road," he says. "Peter and Jamie Thompson, and Alistair Mason were also among the original tenants. We were basically in the middle of farm land, with a cheese factory operating where PMP is now.

"There were four garages in Warkworth's main street at the time and I was told we'd never survive because we were too far out of town."

Time proved otherwise.

Wayne Mason joined the business after completing his apprenticeship in Wellsford. He took a break to go

commercial fishing for four years, returning about 16 years ago when Ian offered him a partnership.

These days, the business handles all types of vehicles, heavy earthmoving equipment, boats and even helicopter parts. Kitchen cupboards, washing machines, fridges and horse floats have also been known to appear in the workshop.

"When I started, cars had wooden door frames and we used to do a lot of panelbeating. These days we just order in the part and bolt it on. The paint on cars is better quality today – it doesn't flake and fade like the old stuff."

Ian says that he won't be surprised to see Woodcocks Rd change again when the Perrendale development goes ahead.

"I've already had an enquiry from a Whangaparaoa company looking for a building to lease for a showroom once Perrendale opens. It wouldn't surprise me if the buildings fronting the road move into more retail sales."

Ian Wayne

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