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If all drivers followed a few simple eco-friendly practices, CO2 emissions could be reduced by hundreds of millions of tons annually.

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Seat Belt Fact and Fiction

There's no debate among the experts on this one. Your seatbelt is your strongest ally in a collision.

Fiction #1: My car has air bags and they offer better protection than seat belts.

Fact: There's no debate among the experts on this one. Your seat belt is your strongest ally in a collision. Air bags are meant to supplement seat belts not replace them.

Fiction #2: I'd be better off being thrown clear of the car in a collision.

Fact: Your chances of surviving a collision are five times better if you stay inside the car. Your seat belt will keep you inside the car; your air bag won't.

Fiction #3: I don't need to buckle up for a quick run to the store.

Fact: Half of all traffic deaths occur within 25 miles of home.

Fiction #4: Pregnant women shouldn't use seat belts.

Fact: Unless your doctor advises you not to use a seat belt (and this is not likely), the seat belt protects you and your baby. Just be sure you wear it correctly (see box).

Fiction #5: The back seat is safer, so it isn't as important that back seat passengers buckle up.

Fact: In a Japanese study, researchers found the risk of serious injury or death for front seat passengers increased almost fivefold when back seat passengers were not buckled up. Sadly, this is because unbuckled back seat passengers are often thrown forward, propelling people in the front seats into the dashboard or windshield.



Safety Fact

During a short summer shower on a hot road (as described below) the roadway can become as slick as ice.

Pregnant?

Worn properly, your seat belt will distribute the forces of a collision over the larger, stronger parts of your body: chest, shoulder, hips. Wear your lap belt snug and low - over your hips, not your stomach. Your shoulder harness should also be snug and should cross over your clavicle and shoulder, never under your arm.

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Personal Matters

Personal Security, Vacation

Whether you're traveling on business or pleasure, give yourself a little peace of mind while you're away by putting these personal security tips into practice.

Home Security

- Double check that locks on all doors and window are secure before you leave.
- If you have neighbors you know and trust, leave a house key and an emergency phone number with one of them.
- Have someone pick up your mail and newspapers each day.
- Outside, turn on motion-detection lights if you have them.
- Indoors, use timers on lamps and radios to keep up the appearance of an occupied home.
- Turn off phone ringers. They say "no one's home" loud and clear to a potential burglar.
- If you'll be gone a while, arrange for your lawns to be mowed and watered.
- If you'll be away for an extended period, ask local police to check your home periodically.

Personal Security

- Leave expensive jewelry and all non-essential credit cards, at home.
- Carry traveler's checks and an ATM card instead of large amounts of cash.
- In hotels, keep the doors locked even when you're in the room.
- Don't spend a lot of time in the hotel lobby. It's prime territory for pickpockets and criminals who'd like to eavesdrop on your plans.
- If you do bring along valuables, store them in the hotel's safe.
- If you are faced with a criminal give up your cash, jewelry, keys and any other valuables.

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Safety Fact

Stop and start smoothly. Abrupt increases/decreases in speed can reduce fuel economy by 33%.



Vehicle Safety

Don't Let Summer Showers Fool You

Read this short scenario and see if you can figure out what the driver is doing wrong.

Our driver is cruising along the road on a hot day when it starts to rain. It has been weeks since it rained, and based on the forecast this will be a very short shower. So our driver simply leaves the vehicle on cruise control, knowing the rain won't continue long enough to require any adjustments in speed or following distance.

First problem: It's already raining and you haven't adjusted your driving. On any wet roadway, there is always the danger that your tires could lose contact with the pavement. This is called hydroplaning. The faster you drive, the more likely you are to hydroplane. When that happens, you will lose much of your control of your steering and braking. In fact, braking while hydroplaning could well send you into a skid. Your best defense is to adjust your driving—and by that we mean, slow down—the minute the as the first drop falls.

Second problem: You may think a summer rain is somehow less of a threat to drivers than cool-weather rains. But in summer heat, oil and grease build up on road surfaces day after day. A good rain can wash a lot of the residue away, but if it's been a while since the last rain, it can take up to an hour to do the job. In the meantime, especially in the first minutes of a summer rain, that oil slick on the roadway can make it extremely slippery.

Third problem: Cruise control. If you start to hydroplane while you're on cruise control, the situation can confuse the cruise system and cause it to actually increase your speed—and the last thing you need in a hydroplane is more speed. So, when it starts to rain after a dry spell:

- Adjust immediately.
- Slow down.
- Increase your following distance to at least 8 seconds.
- If your cruise control is on, turn it off.

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Safety Fact

Stop and start smoothly. Abrupt increases/decreases in speed can reduce fuel economy by 33%.

Don't brake to correct a hydroplane.

If your tires have lost contact with the pavement your steering will probably feel "off" or "loose." If so, react quickly to regain control. To react safely, take your foot off the gas but do not brake. Let your vehicle slow down until your tires contact with the roadway again—this takes only a second or two. Then you can brake as needed.



Streets & Sidewalks

Collisions With Pedestrians, Always A Potential Tragedy
Wherever you drive, no matter the traffic situation, a vehicle-pedestrian collision always ends badly for the pedestrian.

Everywhere there are vehicles, there are pedestrians. In some places, there may be crosswalks and traffic signals set up to help pedestrians safely cross paths with vehicles. Other places, pedestrians may be walking alongside the roadway, possibly with a sidewalk or path marking their territory, but possibly without even that protection. In yet other locations, pedestrians and vehicles essentially share the roadway, practically jostling one another for space.

Wherever you drive, no matter the traffic situation, a vehicle-pedestrian collision always ends badly for the pedestrian. Here are the rules to avoiding a tragedy:

- Actively watch for pedestrians.
- Be especially watchful at night, when pedestrians become far more difficult to spot.
- Yield to pedestrians. Always—even when they do not have the right of way.
- Be patient with children and seniors, both of whom are particularly vulnerable as pedestrians.

Children are small and therefore harder to see. Plus, they don't always understand the dangers of traffic.
Seniors often can't hear or see traffic as well as younger people, and they can't react to hazards as quickly.



Safety Fact

A high percentage of pedestrians who are injured in traffic are crossing a street or intersection improperly when they are struck. So scan for them everywhere.

And when you are the pedestrian, keep these points in mind

- You aren't as easily visible to drivers as a vehicle, especially at night.
- Don't assume your right of way. Watch for the movements of vehicles around you.
- Teach children to respect the power of motorized vehicles and tell them how to act safely around them.

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Be a Big Green Hero

If all drivers followed a few simple eco-friendly practices, CO2 emissions could be reduced by hundreds of millions of tons annually. If that isn't inspiring enough, being a green driver also keeps you safer on the road and sets a great example for the next generation.

Green driving habits...

- Watch your speed. In fact, for every 10 mph (16 kph) you travel over 60 mph (96 kph) your fuel economy is reduced by 4 miles per gallon (6 kph).
- Stop and start smoothly. Abrupt increases/decreases in speed can reduce fuel economy by 33%.
- Stay cool and green. At speeds over 40 mph (65 kph), use the A/C to keep cool on hot days. But at lower speeds, turn off the A/C and roll down the windows.
- Lighten your load. Carrying an additional 100 pounds of cargo can reduce your fuel economy by 2%.
- Car pool or take public transportation. The average commuter drives 30 miles round trip. And an astounding 86% of commuters make the drive alone.

Be a Big Green Hero

Be an environmental superhero. Follow these tips to show younger generations that you care about the world they will inherit from you.

- Drive green.
- Organize carpools for children's activities.
- Walk or bike to nearby stores and parks with your children.
- As you mentor new teen drivers, teach them habits that are safe and green.
- Require teens to pay for their own fuel. It will make them aware of fuel-economy, and may even slow them down.

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How green are you?

How green are your driving habits right now? (5 is highest)

- 5
 4
 3
 2
 1

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