



## Did you know?

While it might be tempting to lower mower blades when summer temperatures reach their hottest, it is possible to cut grass too short. Homeowners who want to cut back on the time they spend mowing their lawns under the hot summer sun should avoid lowering their mower blades too low, as doing so can cause significant damage to the lawn. Lawns that have been cut too low are less capable of surviving drought and are unlikely to thrive. When grass is cut too short, the stem tissue from the grass is exposed, and that exposure can lead to unsightly grass that turns yellow or brown. Grass that is cut too short also may suffer from weaker roots, which in turn makes the grass weaker and less likely to grow in strong. In addition, weaker grass is more susceptible to weed growth, which can be both a nuisance and an eyesore. When mowing, homeowners should remove no more than one-third of the grass blade. Mowing at this height will promote strong roots and protect the grass when the weather gets especially hot in the summer.

## What to do when faced with an auto recall



New cars are purchased or leased to provide a reliable mode of transportation. But some vehicles malfunction even when they are fresh off of the dealership lot. Other times manufacturers or safety watchdog groups determine that certain cars and trucks have an issue that requires a recall to keep roadways safe. Vehicle recall statistics are difficult to pin down. That's because there is no standard rate of recalls per year, as recalls depend on safety statistics for particular makes and models. For example, in 2009 more than 40 million Toyota vehicles were recalled due to a faulty gas pedal.

An automotive recall is how manufacturers inform drivers that there could be something about their cars or trucks that presents a risk of injury or property damage. The recall may be independently conducted by the manufacturer or ordered by a safety group, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The recall involves the manufacturer providing a free, safe and

effective remedy for the faulty component.

When a recall is announced, drivers may not have to immediately visit a dealership to have the problem corrected. Owners should wait for an official letter. The letter will narrow down which vehicles are affected. There should be a specific window of time presented in which the vehicle can be repaired. Vehicle owners are urged to pay attention to the performance of their cars or trucks to see if they are exhibiting any problems. If so, schedule an appointment for repair according to the recall instructions provided. The notification letter should include the risk of hazard posed by the problem as well as the free remedy and how long the repair should take. There also should be a description of what an owner can do if he

or she is unable to have the problem remedied within a reasonable amount of time and without charge.

If repair work has been done on a vehicle prior to knowledge of the recall, owners may be eligible for reimbursement for their expenses, provided they kept their receipts.

While reimbursement for damages that the defect may have caused are not covered by recalls, owners may be able to solicit reimbursement privately. The following are steps to take when informed of a recall:

1. Contact the dealer service manager and explain that you are inquiring about work required as part of a recall.
2. If the manager has not remedied the situation and provided the next steps, contact the manufacturer, which should be able to handle the situation.
3. If all else fails, Americans can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov). Canadians can contact Transport Canada at [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca).

## Protect vehicles in hot conditions



Dramatic fluctuations in temperature can wreak havoc on automobiles. While cars and trucks are designed to be reliable under various conditions, sometimes the weather can get the best of even the most reliable vehicle.

Many people associate car troubles with cold weather. However, cars are susceptible to breakdowns when it is hot outside. Extreme heat adds to an already high temperature under the hood, requiring ventilation and cooling systems to work that much harder. Batteries, alternators, starters, fan motors, and cooling systems are particularly vulnerable to high heat. It's easy for a car to overheat and breakdown. Proper maintenance and some hot weather guidelines can keep drivers safe and on the road when temperatures soar, whether drivers are going on a quick ride or an extended road trip.

\* Be sure the radiator is working properly and is filled with fluid at all times. This helps prevent overheating, which can strand a vehicle on the side of the road.

\* Hot temperatures cause items to expand, such as the air mole-

cules inside of the tires. Make sure the tires are properly inflated so blowouts do not occur.

\* Keep up-to-date with oil changes and other routine maintenance. Vehicles that are well maintained are less likely to be susceptible to heat strain.

\* Proper air flow is essential to cool an engine and keep a vehicle air conditioning system operating efficiently. If the cooling system has not recently been serviced, have it done before the hot weather arrives.

\* Replace an old battery, and top off a functioning battery with distilled water when necessary, particularly if evaporation has occurred.

\* Clean the vehicle so that it will better reflect the sun's rays, cutting down on radiant heat.

\* When the vehicle is parked, use a car cover or a reflective shade in the windshield to protect the interior from sun damage and excessive heat.

\* Tinted windows can help block out more of the sun's ultraviolet rays. Make sure that tint is legal and applied properly if it is done after-market.

\* Plan road trips for early in the morning or late at night to cut down on the amount of time spent driving during the peak heat and sunshine.

\* Passengers should wear appropriate clothing and apply sunscreen. Car windows do not block UV light, and passengers may be susceptible to sunburn even when they're in the car.

\* Park in the shade whenever possible.

\* Never leave children or pets unattended in a vehicle, even for short moments.

\* If the temperature gauge inside of the car reads hot, pull over, open the hood and turn the heat on inside the car to expel some of the pent-up heat.

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