

Keep safe on the road during Easter traffic

Although the Easter period provides families with a much needed break away from school and work, it is statistically the most dangerous time of year to travel on South Africa's roads, which experience high volumes of vehicles that are often not fit for long journeys, or are being driven fatigued drivers.



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The South African division of global powertrain and vehicle safety technology leader Federal-Mogul has put together a number of useful hints and tips for keeping safe on the road this Easter. Federal-Mogul technical adviser, Bertie Steyn stresses that it is of the utmost importance to complete fundamental vehicle point checks before undertaking a cross-country journey.

"Before setting off on holiday, it is essential that checks are carried out on a car's tyres, brakes, oil, transmission fluid, wiper blades and all lights. Any failure in these areas may have fatal consequences, simply as a result of being overlooked. The most effective way of ensuring peace-of-mind in this regard is to book a vehicle in for a safety inspection at a specialist centre," he explains.

In tough economic times, going away for a short break can already prove costly, and many motorists may not be able to afford this service. In this case, Steyn reveals that the driver can conduct personal safety inspections from home. "It is important that to ensure that all headlights and indicators are in working order, and that the engine has sufficient oil, coolant and brake fluid. Wiper blades must be in good working condition and the washer tank should be filled with an effective cleaning solution."

Steyn adds that a home check should also include a thorough inspection of the spare wheel set to ensure that there are no missing components, while tyres and shock absorbers should be checked for wear and tear. "If there is any damage to shock absorbers or tyres, it is highly recommended that the vehicle is taken to a specialist fitment centre, as this will affect braking and performance."

Although this may seem to be an unforeseen expense, the cost is insignificant compared to the potentially catastrophic results of an accident. Steyn reveals that squeaky or 'spongy-feeling' brakes are telltale signs that the braking system must

be checked. "In this case, it is also advisable to take the vehicle to a specialist who can determine precisely what action should be taken."

April weather can also be unpredictable, and it is important to slow down in rainy conditions, as it takes far longer to stop or adjust on wet roads. Headlights should always be turned on too. Other important aspects to consider during long distance journeys is to always abide by the speed limit, maintain a safe following distance behind other vehicles, and to take regular breaks at designated rest stops located along the national road network.

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