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IS YOUR CAR AT RISK FOR A BREAKDOWN? Roadside Safety: What to do if your car has a breakdown.

Morristown, New Jersey, February 3, 2010 A vehicle breakdown can be quite stressful as well as dangerous for you and your passengers. Today's cars and trucks are equipped with high-tech computer-controlled systems that have vastly improved driving performance. As a result, cars and trucks can accumulate a lot of mileage with very little evidence of wear and tear. Because your vehicle may be running well, it makes it easy to forget about routine maintenance. In turn, your vehicle is at greater risk for breakdown.

Dan O'Connor, Service Adviser at Shade Tree Garage in Morristown, says, "The general perception is that preventative maintenance is an unnecessary cost for fixing problems that do not yet exist. The fact of the matter is that preventative maintenance can be a valuable investment; increasing fuel efficiency and saving the expense of emergency repair service, towing charges and even the inconvenience of a breakdown." When your vehicle is properly maintained it will last longer, run better and hold its value longer. More importantly, it will keep you and your passengers safe and on the road.

At Shade Tree Garage vehicle safety and reliability is of utmost importance. With each visit, the trusted Shade Tree Garage team performs a 27-point safety inspection so their customers can be alerted to potential problems with their cars before they become major breakdowns or costly repairs. Your local independent automotive repair shop should be doing the same type of safety inspection for you.

Despite the efforts of preventative maintenance, breakdowns sometimes occur. When they do, you want to make sure you and your passengers are safe. To help you, here are some Roadside Safety tips from Shade Tree Garage.

At the first sign of a problem, don't panic. Instead, slow down and look for a safe place to pull over. Once you've located a safe place to pull off the road, park your disabled vehicle where it can be seen for at least 200 feet in each direction. You want to try to avoid pulling off in a curve or near a hill and it's important to make sure all four wheels are off the traveled portion of the roadway.

Once off the highway, turn on your emergency flashers, tie a white cloth to the left door handle, and raise the hood to let drivers know your vehicle is disabled. When the way is clear, exit your vehicle carefully and close the door behind you. Walk to the passenger side of your vehicle and use your cell phone to call for roadside assistance. If there are any passengers, they should exit the vehicle on the side away from traffic. If you are alone and feel you are at risk, lock all the doors of your vehicle and call for help.

Remember, a well-maintained vehicle not only operates more efficiently, it minimizes the potential for breakdowns so stick to maintenance schedules and alert your automotive repair shop to any problems you may be experiencing.

Shade Tree Garage is a trusted independent automotive repair shop located in Morristown, New Jersey. They work hard to accomplish their mission: "To give you peace of mind about the safety and reliability of your car." To schedule an appointment for automotive repair or servicing call Shade Tree Garage at 973-540-9880.

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