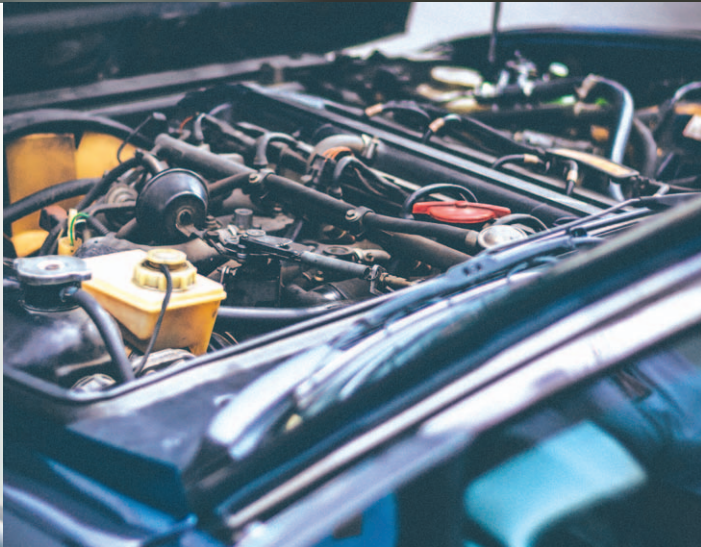


# DRIVE & Ride

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# Anderson enjoys best of both worlds at his new job

By ALLAN TINKER

Ethan Anderson is the new mechanic at Mechanics Plus, versed in the mechanical skills he learned from his grandfather Kenny Berge and fine-tuned at the Bismarck State College's Automotive Technology where he earned his Associate's Degree in that field.

With close friend Garrett Weisser, he had traveled through the area many times on the way to Harvey, where Weisser lives. They hunted and fished together, every weekend, including ice fishing, which Anderson loves.

On one trip, the two friends took the road through Wilton, then east and through the center of North Dakota and saw the heart in the park. His dad told him that there was a job available at Mechanics Plus in McClusky and Anderson said his dad "knew it would be good for him."

Anderson was born in Hettinger; then lived in Lemmon, South Dakota, moving with his parents to Miles City where he graduated from Custer County District High School.

His father Kirk Anderson is a range specialist with BLM; his mother Anne is a teacher at the local community college, where she handles GED students. He has two sisters, Elise and Ella. In school, Anderson said he was "pretty decent" in all sports, earning the most improved player in football, and playing basketball and participating in track as well.

After he graduated from college in May of 2019, he spent eight months working at Sax Motors in Dickinson, then came here to where his friend lived.

"I applied at Mechanics Plus, talked to Brandon and Erin,



Ethan Anderson is the new mechanic at Mechanics Plus, pictured here in his work corner by his computer and tools.

and the rest is history," he said. "It is all in God's plan."

With his grandfather Berge, who had a shop in Lemmon, to where he is now, big into "newer technologies and cars," he can re-program and re-wire to fix the newer malfunctions in motor vehicles. "It is different from what I grew up with." "I love Bismarck," Anderson added. I went to school there and know so many other students from attending. I can drive 50 miles from here and have dinner with a friend. I have the best of both worlds here, and I am

getting used to the wind," he smiled at the latter part. Where he comes from, they do not see as much or as strong of winds as here.

"I love McClusky, too. Everyone is so welcoming. All my people went west, I am doing my own thing and I have friends all the way to Fargo.

"In high school, it was the same people every day. Choosing new friends leads to one thing and then another and I give a big thank you to Brandon and Erin for the job and helping me find an apartment."



## 3 potential indicators of engine trouble

Many drivers have found themselves stranded on the side of the road at one point or another. Whether the culprit is engine trouble, a flat tire or another issue, finding oneself stranded on the side of the road in need of assistance is an often helpless feeling that no one wants to experience twice.

Even drivers whose automotive clubs or insurance companies provide roadside assistance services want to avoid using such services. One way to do just that is to learn about potential indicators of engine trouble.



light comes on. In addition to check engine lights, drivers should heed warning lights referring to oil pressure and oil levels.

### Warning lights

Vehicle warning lights exist for a reason. According to the automotive retailer Pep Boys®, a check engine light typically illuminates when vehicle sensors detect there are issues stemming from a loss of power. This can be dangerous, and Pep Boys® recommends drivers pull over and call for a tow the moment the

### Poor gas mileage

An easy way for drivers to monitor vehicle performance is to keep gas mileage in mind. If a vehicle suddenly feels like it's not getting as much mileage out of a tank of gas as it used to, this might be indicative of engine

ENGINE continued on pg 7



## The safest place for kids in the car

Riding in a vehicle can be an exciting prospect for children. Such rides provide a chance to see the world outside of the house, and the speed with which scenery is flying by can be exhilarating for young minds.

Children are first introduced to riding in cars as babies, when child safety seats will keep them secure. Although laws vary depending on where people are driving, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises that children remain in a rear-facing car seat until age two or older. As they get older and gain weight, children who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their seats should use a forward-facing seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat manufacturer, says the AAP.

When children are old

enough to graduate from car seat to booster seat to sitting in the car with only a seat belt, parents may wonder about where their youngsters can sit when riding in a vehicle. One area of the car tends to be safer than others for children. Researchers from the University of Buffalo who studied crash-related fatalities in relation to seat location discovered that the backseat is 59 to 86 percent safer than the front seat. What's more, the middle seat in the back of the car is 25 percent safer than the window seats.

The science behind the study is that the middle seat offers the most distance from impact during a collision, or what the industry calls "the crumple zone." The outer seats will be more affected, while the middle seat remains more insulated. However, the middle seat is only the safest

when used with a full seat belt, rather than just a lap harness; otherwise, children should sit in the back where a full three-point seat belt is available, advises the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In addition, it can be tempting to cave under pressure and allow tweens to ride in the front of the car when they ask to do so or say that it is embarrassing to ride in back - since all of their friends are riding up front. The organization Safe Ride 4 Kids says studies show the safest place in the car for tweens is the back, until they are at least 13 years of age.

Riding in the middle seat in the back of the car is the safest place for passengers, including children. Parents and caregivers should keep safety in mind when kids are in the car.

## 3 tips to drive more efficiently

### Tips to drive efficiently

1. Avoid rooftop cargo.
2. Don't treat your trunk like a closet.
3. Use cruise control when possible.

Unlicensed drivers learning to drive are often taught the benefits of defensive driving. Safety is often the focus of such lessons, but the benefits of driving safely and efficiently extend far beyond safety.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, aggressive driving can lower gas mileage by roughly 15 to 30 percent at highway speeds. In addition, a 2017 study from researchers at the DOE's Oak Ridge National Laboratory found that aggressive driving can contribute to a reduce fuel efficiency by as much as 40 percent in stop-and-go traffic.

Speeding as well as rapid acceleration and braking are hallmarks of aggressive driving, and each of these habits puts drivers, their passengers and other motorists at risk of accident and injury. By taking these steps to drive more efficiently, drivers can save money and potentially even lives.

#### 1. Avoid rooftop cargo.

Rooftop cargo units can be beneficial for family vacations or other extended getaways. But using rooftop storage units for items you don't need on a daily basis or simply keeping empty units attached to vehicle roofs compromises fuel efficiency. Rooftop cargo bins increase the aerodynamic drag on vehicles, forcing them to burn more fuel than they would need to burn while moving without anything attached to the roof. DOE estimates suggest that large, blunt rooftop cargo boxes can reduce fuel

efficiency by as much as 25 percent when a vehicle is moving at speeds between 65 and 75 miles per hour.

#### 2. Don't treat your trunk like a closet.

Trunks are not closets, so resist the temptation to use them to store golf clubs and other items that are better stored in a house or garage. Research has indicated that an extra 100 pounds in a vehicle can reduce gas mileage by about 1 percent. Because that figure is based on the percentage of extra weight relative to the vehicle's weight, drivers of small vehicles may find using their trunks as closets to be especially costly and inefficient.

#### 3. Use cruise control when possible.

Cruise control makes it possible for vehicles to maintain constant speeds. That helps drivers ensure they are always obeying the speed limit, and it keeps cars from the constant acceleration and deceleration that wastes fuel.

Efficient driving is safe, cost-effective and eco-friendly. With some simple strategies, drivers can do their part to protect the planet and make roads safer, all while saving money.

## Tips for staying safe with keyless systems

Auto manufacturers have long embraced technology that can streamline the automotive experience for drivers. For example, several years ago keyless entry and ignition systems were introduced, initially on high-end vehicle before they became standard on many other models.

Keyless entry systems require a fob, which sends a signal to the receiver inside the vehicle. The fob transmits a low-frequency code to the car's internal computer system, which engages the locks and will allow the driver to push a button on the dashboard or console to start the vehicles. The fob can be stashed away in a pocket or purse and still send the signal, which makes it convenient for drivers. Drivers with arthritis or hand injuries also may find keyless systems an asset.

Because fobs work on wireless systems, hackers potentially can intercept the fob-to-car signal. That enables a thief to not only open the vehicle's doors, but also to potentially drive away as well. Even though the fob/car security pairing is unique and can create billions of codes, researchers at Radboud University in the Netherlands and the University of Birmingham found that, by intercepting the wireless signal just twice, they could narrow down the pos-



sible combinations from billions to just 200,000. After that, a computer can figure out the code in just half an hour and unlock the car. Potentially, a thief can gather car codes as drivers enter their vehicles during the day, then return later to steal a number of cars.

Thieves who purchase signal amplifiers also pose a threat. These amplifiers magnify the reach of the fob signal so that a vehicle owner can be in his or her house with the fob, but the thief can walk up to the car and open it - even if the fob is far enough away that it should not engage. One way to circumvent this is to buy

a signal-blocking pouch that can hold the key fob. Also, an old-school steering wheel or gear shift lock is an effective way to provide another layer of protection.

Drivers also should be aware of their surroundings as they approach their vehicles. Thieves may count on keyless entry systems to be able to hop into a vehicle once the owner gets within range and drive away.

Vehicle technology thrives to make driving as convenient as possible, but some features also may make things more convenient for prospective thieves.

## Did you know?

The United States and Canada have two of the lowest minimum age driving requirements in the world. Minimum driving age requirements vary by the state and province in the United States and Canada, respectively. However, in many areas of the United States, drivers can begin driving with a learner's permit around the age of 14 (drivers with learner's permits often must be accompanied by fully licensed drivers), while the minimum driving age in most Canadian provinces is 16 (it is 14 in Alberta). Throughout much of Africa, including in countries such as Egypt, Kenya and Morocco, the minimum driving age is 18. The Central American countries of Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua also make young people wait until the age of 18 before they can get behind the wheel. Much of South America is the same, with only Argentina (17) and Chile (17 with parental approval) allowing young people to drive before they turn 18. Many countries in Asia, including China (18), India (18 for cars, 16 for gearless bikes under 50 cc) and Japan (18 for cars and motorcycles over 401 cc), also have higher minimum age driving requirements than the United States and Canada.

Self-driving cars might once have seemed like a futuristic concept that may never come to fruition, but the future is now. In 2018, Waymo, once known as the Google self-driving car project, launched its commercial self-driving car service in Phoenix.

While it's not widely available and safety protocols, including the presence of human safety operators behind the wheel, are in place, Waymo has made it possible for people to pay for self-driving car rides. Tech industry insiders note that Google's fellow tech giants, including Apple and IBM, also are working on self-driving car services. And much like many things in the tech industry, the self-driving car market figures to evolve rapidly, making it seem as though the availability of self-driving cars became widespread overnight.

However, today's self-driving vehicles are the byproduct of years of research and sizable financial investments. For example, a little more than a decade ago, Darpa, the experimental laboratory of the Pentagon, hosted the Urban Challenge at an Air Force base in Southern California. At that event, which was one of a handful sponsored by the United States military, several driverless vehicles traversed real traffic conditions. That showcase was an integral component of the foundation of the modern self-driving car industry.



## Handle a breakdown with ease

Drivers expect their vehicles to safely transport them from point A to point B. But sometimes drivers find themselves stranded on the side of the road due to a breakdown. That can be an especially precarious position to be in, but knowing what to do during a breakdown can help drivers and their passengers get through such situations unscathed.

**1. Find a safe spot to pull over.** Whenever possible, guide the car to a shoulder or area out of the line of traffic but still visible to oncoming traffic. If the car is not drivable, enlist the help of someone to push it into a safe zone.

**2. Turn on hazard lights.** Esurance advises to put on hazard lights, which will warn other drivers that something is wrong. Hazard lights also may alert other motorists who might offer assistance. Once your hazard lights are on, pop the hood, which can serve as an additional alert to other drivers.

**3. Engage the emergency brake.** Turn the wheel away from the road and put on the emergency brake to help prevent the car from rolling.

**4. Set up other warning signals.** Prepared drivers keep cones, reflective triangles or flares in their cars. AARP suggests placing three

### 6 ways to handle a breakdown

1. Find a safe spot to pull over.
2. Turn on hazard lights.
3. Engage the emergency brake.
4. Set up other warnings signals.
5. Remain in the vehicle.
6. Call for assistance.

warning signals. The first should be 50 feet away and directly behind the vehicle. The other two can then be placed nearer to the vehicle.

**5. Remain in the vehicle.** It is safer to stay in the vehicle and call for help than to get out and stand on the side of a busy roadway.

**6. Call for assistance.** Use a mobile phone to dial a roadside assistance service or tow truck. Drivers also may want to contact the nearest police station to ask for help.

Roadside assistance programs are available for a fee from private companies and sometimes through vehicle dealerships or insurance companies. Such services can provide peace of mind if and when breakdowns occur.



## Safety features that may help you save money on auto insurance

Vehicles with high safety ratings may not only save drivers' lives in the event of collisions, but they also may save them money. As an incentive for buying cars with various safety features, many insurance companies offer deep discounts to drivers. Although insurance companies may vary in what they consider safety features, the following are generalized options that may qualify drivers for discounted insurance rates.

**• Antilock braking system:** These systems have been standard equipment on vehicles manufactured since 2012.

**• Air bags:** These safety features help cushion the blow for people during a crash and include front and side-protection. Discounts increase with the number of air bags.

**• Adaptive cruise control:** This feature monitors traffic conditions and adjusts speed by controlling the throttle and brakes to maintain distance from other vehicles.

**• Daytime running lights:** Daytime running lights may make drivers eligible for small discounts.

**• Electronic stability control:** This prevents vehicles from skidding out or rolling over during hard turns.

**• Lane departure warnings:** These systems alert drivers if they get too close to the edge of a lane.

**• Blind spot sensors:** These sensors light up or make a sound when a vehicle is in drivers' blind spots, potentially preventing collisions during lane changes.

# Modifications can make driving safer for seniors

Driving provides an almost unrivaled level of independence. The ability to travel beyond a neighborhood or even one's hometown without a chaperone is probably what excites new drivers so much and makes them eager to get their licenses and cars. Senior drivers also may define their independence by their ability to drive. Few things diminish senior dignity and independence faster than losing the ability to drive.

Despite popular misconceptions, seniors are some of the safest drivers around. The experts at Hartford Auto Insurance indicate that the number of accidents involving older drivers actually decreases as age increases. It's the risk factors like medical conditions, medication usage and reduced physical function that increase the risk for accidents and injuries involving older drivers. Thanks to technology and some other well-designed devices, seniors may be able to continue driving longer than the aging drivers of years past.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, a nonprofit research and education association, says roughly 90 percent of seniors don't take advantage of simple, often inexpensive features that can greatly improve safety and extend their time behind the wheel. Here are some considerations.

**• Cushions and seat pads:** Cushions do more than just alleviate hip and back pain while sitting. Cushions and pads can raise drivers up and improve their line of sight over the dashboard. Swivel



pads can make it easier to enter and exit the car as well.

**• Adaptive cruise control:** This feature can adjust speed automatically to maintain a consistent space between vehicles.

**• Adaptive headlights:** These headlights, also known as steerable headlights, can improve visibility by changing the direction of the light beam with the movement of the steering wheel.

**• Pedal extenders:** Extenders help short drivers reach the pedals while maintaining a safe distance from the steering wheel and potential airbag deployment.

**• Hand controls:** Whether one has sensory changes in the feet from surgery or a medical condition, adaptive hand controls can move the "pedals" up to the steering column.

**• Blind spot warning and other sensors:** Today's cars can be equipped with any

number of sensors that can detect oncoming traffic, cars to the left or right of the vehicle, items or cars behind the vehicle when reversing, and even if the vehicle has drifted out of the lane. These are all great safety features for any driver, but may be especially helpful to seniors.

**• Parking assist:** Parking assist technology can steer the vehicle into a space with little input from the driver.

**• Voice control:** Avoiding distractions and keeping hands on the wheel is enhanced by voice controls, which can be set up to do things like turn on the radio or adjust climate control.

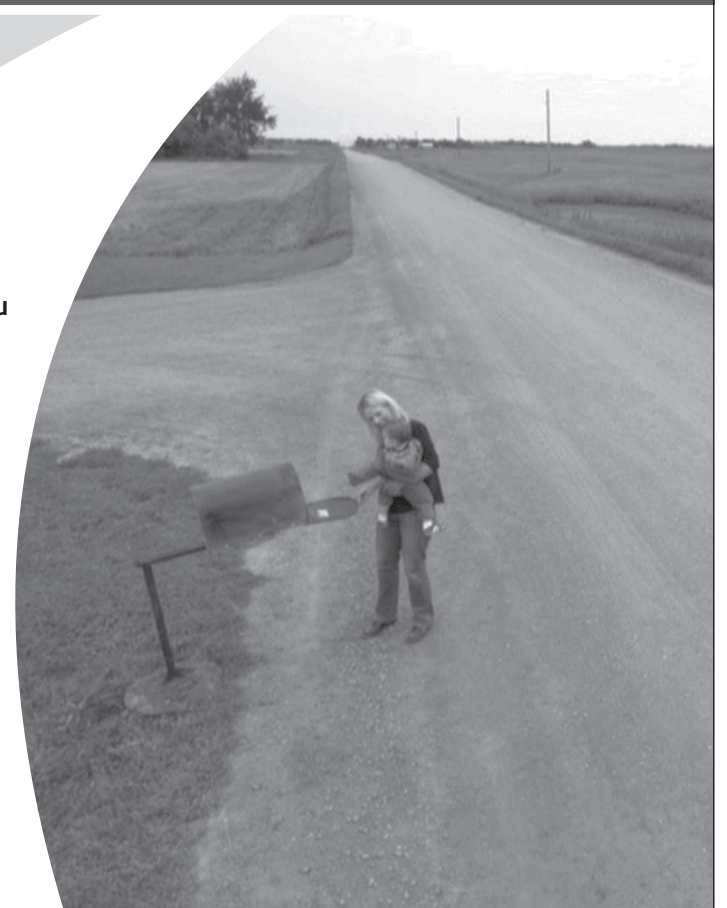
**• Convex mirrors:** Special mirrors increase the field of vision.

Seniors have many tools available to make driving safer and more comfortable, which can prolong their years behind the wheel.

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## Safety first when driving with pets in the car

Many people can recognize the familiar image of a car traveling down the road with the head of a seemingly happy dog hanging out from the front passenger seat. Traveling in such a way may seem harmless, but doing so can be detrimental to both pets and their owners.

According to Paws to Click, a community that aims to inspire pet owners to travel responsibly with their pets, allowing pets to travel in cars without employing a harness poses a significant threat to everyone in the car. The group notes that an unrestrained 75 lb. dog will exert about 2,250 lbs. of force in a crash in which the car is traveling at just 30 miles per hour. Such force can injure others in the car as well as the pet. In addition, unrestrained pets may challenge first responders in an effort to protect their owners after an accident has taken place.

It makes all the sense in the world to harness pets when taking them along in the car. After all, drivers and their passengers wear seat belts, so why not provide the same safety net to pets? But Paws to Click notes that 84 percent of dog owners drive with their dogs in the car without using restraints. This despite the fact that American Veterinary Medical Foundation advises all pet owners to properly restrain their pets before departing on a car trip, no matter how short or how long

that trip is expected to be.

In addition to properly restraining pets on car trips, pet owners can take these steps to ensure their pets are safe.

- Don't take pets along on car trips unless it's absolutely necessary. It can be fun to take a pet with you everywhere, but the AVMF advises pet owners to leave their pets home when possible. Pets that are not suffering from separation anxiety will be fine at home without their owners. Pet owners whose pet owners are exhibiting signs of anxiety should address the anxiety so pets are comfortable at home alone. Taking pets everywhere is not a cure for separation anxiety.

- Do not leave pets unattended in cars. A study from the Louisiana Office of Public Health found that temperatures in a dark sedan or a light gray minivan parked on a hot, but cloudy day reached higher than 125 F in just 20 minutes. The study also found that cracking the window in such situations had little effect on the temperature inside the vehicle. On hot days, leave pets at home. Owners who must take their pets with them should never leave them in the car, as temperatures inside vehicles rise quickly, putting pets' health in jeopardy.

Many pet owners are tempted to take their pets with them on car trips. But that should only be done when absolutely necessary, and safety must be the utmost priority when traveling with pets in a car

## Tire maintenance keeps drivers safe

Maintaining tires is an important component of safe driving. Tires are some of the hardest working parts on a car or truck and are subjected to wear and tear every time rubber meets the road.

Tires affect many components of driving, including handling, braking and the comfort of the ride.

Maintaining tires makes driving safe not only for drivers and their passengers, but also for fellow motorists.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that, in 2017, 738 fatalities occurred because of tire-related crashes. Many of those crashes were no doubt preventable, and that only highlights the importance of maintaining tires and monitoring their performance.

Poor tire maintenance can lead to premature wear and potentially result in a blowout. The automotive group AAA notes it is important to visually inspect tires as often as possible.

Drivers should look for overall tread wear. Pay special attention to tread wear on one edge of the tires, which could indicate poor alignment. Erratic tread wear may mean tires are out of balance.

Drivers also should pay attention to how their cars drive and sounds.

Unusual vibration or thumping noises suggest issues with the tires. A car that pulls in one direction also may be experiencing tire problems.

Vehicle owners should be aware of the routine maintenance steps that can keep



them safe and improve the life expectancy of tires.

**Tire pressure:** The NHTSA says only 19 percent of consumers properly check and inflate their tires. Keeping tires properly inflated is one of the most important steps to maintaining them. Tires lose around 1 psi per month, and underinflated or overinflated tires can contribute to unusual wear, blowouts and even excessive fuel consumption.

**Rotation:** Check the owner's manual or recommendations from the tire manufacturer, but know that most mechanics advise having tires rotated every 5,000 to 8,000 miles. Rotation helps distribute wear more evenly on tires.

**Balancing:** AAA says balancing also helps minimize uneven wear and tear. Balanced tires are achieved by using small weights attached to the wheels to limit vibration of the tire and wheels as

### Tire Maintenance

1. Tire pressure.
2. Rotation.
3. Balancing.
4. Alignment.

they turn. New tires should be balanced, and tires also should be balanced after one or more is removed to repair a puncture.

**Alignment:** Vehicles have wheel alignment measurements that pertain to manufacturers' specifications.

Alignment that falls outside of the range can impact handling, fuel economy and tread wear. A drift or pull suggests alignment problems and should be addressed.

Vehicle owners should keep tire inspection and maintenance in mind as part of their overall car care plan.

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## The importance of routine vehicle maintenance

Owning a car is a big responsibility. Drivers who plan to keep their vehicles for the long haul must emphasize maintenance if they want to keep adding miles to their odometers. In fact, the automotive information site CarAdvice says that routine maintenance may be the most important thing drivers can do for their vehicles.

A vehicle needs consistent care if it is to run efficiently. Maintenance also reduces the risk of roadside breakdowns and costly repairs. Here's a look at some of the benefits of staying on top of maintenance.

•**Saves money:** Even though maintenance costs money, sticking to a consistent maintenance schedule can save big bucks in the long run. For ex-

ample, the cost of rotating and aligning tires is considerably less than repairing a car after a major blowout and paying for a tow and tire replacement.

•**Improves performance and efficiency:** Routine maintenance includes oil changes, filter changes and fluid top-offs. Such tasks keep engines running smoothly. Ignoring this routine maintenance can put engines in jeopardy of breaking down and adversely affect vehicle performance, diminishing fuel economy and leading to a sluggish ride.

• **Identifies safety issues:** Routine inspections and work performed by reputable service stations help drivers stay abreast of recalls or issues that can affect the safety of the vehicle.

•**Maintains a maintenance record:** When the time comes to sell the vehicle, having a log of routine maintenance indicates to potential buyers that the vehicle was well cared for.

•**Keeps compliance:** Vehicles covered under manufacturer's warranties typically need to be maintained in adherence to factory-recommended maintenance schedules. This ensures that the vehicle is in compliance and will be covered in the event of a warranty claim.

Routine vehicle maintenance is important for a variety of reasons. Drivers can work with a trusted and reliable mechanic to develop a schedule that keeps their cars and trucks on the road.

## Exercise caution around brake dust

As cars age, certain wear and tear is to be expected. One of the realities of frequent driving, particularly for drivers who routinely drive in stop-and-go traffic, is the gradual deterioration of brake pads. Do-it-yourselfers can replace brake pads on their own, but those that do should be aware of a potential hazard when doing so.

The Mesothelioma Center says that brakes sometimes contain asbestos due to that material's heat-resistant qualities. As brakes start to wear down over time, the asbestos can escape. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says that, while many new automotive components are asbestos-free, asbestos hasn't been eliminated entirely from the industry.

That is why mechanics and do-it-yourselfers need to exercise caution when repairing or replacing brakes. Brake dust may inadvertently expose individuals to cancer-causing asbestos through inhalation or ingestion. OSHA says that exposure to asbestos, if not properly controlled, can cause mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis. Symptoms may not appear for years or even decades after contact with asbestos fibers.

The Mesothelioma Center estimates that asbestos is present in 30 to 80 percent of brakes and other components. The routine task of "blowing out" brake surfaces, which involves using an air hose to clean the surfaces of brakes and rotors, is one of the most common ways people are exposed to asbestos through brake dust.

Gray-black brake dust is made up of iron particles



formed by the grinding of the brake rotor by the brake pads. However, brake dust also can contain some metallic elements and other components housed in the brake pad — including asbestos.

The automotive resource YourMechanic says that, while brake dust is not indicative of a poor braking system, over time brake dust can corrode the clear coat on a car and may eat into the aluminum alloy surface of the wheel. That is why so many drivers try to clean away brake dust, potentially exposing them to dangerous materials.

DIYers may be better off visiting professional service centers to have brakes addressed rather than doing the job on their own. OSHA says all automotive brake and clutch repair facilities in the United States must comply with the OSHA asbestos standard. These include using negative pressure enclosure/HEPA vacuum systems and low pressure/wet cleaning methods.

While asbestos is being phased out of many automotive components, it is always best to treat bakes, clutches and more with extra caution in the event that asbestos is present.

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# Safely use GPS systems while driving

It wasn't too long ago that drivers pulled into filling stations and rest stops to pick up maps to help them find their way. But nowadays global positioning systems have rendered paper maps and atlases somewhat obsolete. GPS systems are now so advanced that many even help drivers avoid traffic and/or toll roads.

Navigation systems can be used from smartphones or technology built into cars. GPS systems are convenient and often very accurate. But drivers run the risk of accident anytime their attention is diverted from the road - even during momentary glances at GPS devices. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says distracted driving is dangerous and claimed 3,166 lives in 2017 alone. The Ontario Provincial Police say distracted driving continues to be the No. 1 cause of accidents in the province, causing more fatal accidents than any other factor.

How can drivers safely use navigation systems while operating a vehicle? The following tips can help.

- Set the address destination and plot the course while the vehicle is parked. GPS should not be tinkered with while driving. If new directions are needed, or if you need a look ahead at the route, pull over to do so safely.

- Engage vocal guidance. Allow the navigation system



to speak directions to you so you can keep your eyes on the road as much as possible.

- Familiarize yourself with the route prior to your trip. GPS systems are not infallible, so you should have a basic understanding of where you are going even if you plan to use GPS. This way you can anticipate turns or highway exits before the alerts and stay attuned to the traffic ahead. Navigation systems may sometimes direct drivers down the wrong side of one-way streets, so common sense should always prevail.
- Know how to operate the

device before driving. Learning the tools and features of the device while the car is in motion is a recipe for an accident. Instead, learn how to use it before hitting the road so you can engage the screen or navigation system as minimally as possible while on the move.

- Enlist the help of a co-pilot. Ask a passenger to take charge and help with directions so you can keep your eyes on the road.

GPS navigation systems come in handy, but they should always be used with safety in mind.



# Smarter driving for foggy weather

Weather patterns can be fickle. One moment it may be chilly and sunny, while the next warm and wet. As a new season arrives, fog may roll in along with it.

Fog occurs during extremely humid conditions. For fog to be present, some type of dust or air pollution also needs to be present in the air so that microscopic water particles can surround it. According to the National Geographic Society, fog occurs when water vapor, or water in its gaseous form, condenses. During condensation, molecules of water vapor combine to make tiny liquid water droplets that hang in the air. You can see fog because of these tiny water droplets.

While fog can be a marvel to behold - completely obscuring landmarks or mountains in some instances - it can make driving challenging. Even seasoned drivers find fog is dangerous and difficult to drive in. The Federal Highway Administration says fog may contribute to more than 500 fatalities each year.

When driving in foggy conditions, drivers' full attention needs to be directed to the road. These tips also can help keep drivers safe when navigating foggy conditions.

- **Reduce speed.** Slowing down affords you more reaction time if traffic stops or if other hazards seemingly appear out of nowhere. Leave considerable space between cars.

- **Reduce Speed.**
- Engage the wipers.
- Use low beams.
- Dive in the right lane.
- Remain engaged.
- Take a break.

- **Engage the wipers.** Improve visibility as much as possible by turning on the windshield wipers and the defroster to help.

- **Use low beams.** Make sure your vehicle is as visible as possible to others. Turn on the low-beam headlights so your car is noticeable to other motorists. High beams can cause glare, so avoid them, however tempting it may be to use them.

- **Drive in the right lane.** Use the lines and reflectors on the right side of the road to help guide your direction, suggests AccuWeather.

- **Remain engaged.** Do not use cruise control or allow any distractions in the car when driving in fog. Turn off the radio, put your phone away and focus on driving.

- **Take a break.** If the fog is greatly compromising your visibility, pull over in a safe spot or parking lot until it dissipates. Make sure to put on your hazard lights. The California DMV says the best advice for driving in fog is not to do so.

Driving in fog can be tricky and unsafe. Always exercise caution when fog rolls in.

## ENGINE continued from page 2

troubles. A fuel additive such as a fuel injector cleaner might be helpful because it can clean clogged fuel injectors that can affect performance and lead to poor acceleration. However, the automotive retailer Advance Auto Parts® notes that such products are not a one-size-fits-all cure. If vehicles continue to suffer from reduced gas mileage, drivers should bring them to a mechanic for a thorough examination.

### Jerking

Some signs of engine trouble are not as subtle as reduced gas mileage.

Vehicles that begin to jerk while they're being driven are likely suffering from some form of engine trouble. Jerking might put a scare in drivers, but it's not necessarily the result of a major problem, even if it is one that should be addressed immediately. A jerking vehicle that stalls puts drivers, their passengers and other motorists at risk of accident, so bring this issue to the

attention of your mechanic immediately. Poorly functioning spark plugs may be the culprit behind jerking, and that's a relatively inexpensive and quick fix.

However, other issues can cause jerking as well, so don't delay in speaking with your mechanic.

Vehicles may indicate engine troubles in various ways. Drivers should contact their mechanics immediately whenever they suspect engine trouble is affecting their vehicles.

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## 3 unique ways to save money on the day you buy a car

Short of buying a home, many consumers will never spend more money than they do when purchasing a new vehicle. According to the automotive resource Kelley Blue Book®, new-vehicle prices increased by 2 percent between April 2018 and April 2019, rising to slightly less than \$37,000 in that period. With so much money at stake, car buyers' decisions in regard to which car to buy and how to finance the purchase are significant. Some financial variables, including sales tax, may be set in stone. However, buyers can make the process of buying new cars more affordable.

### 1. Pay the taxes upfront.

When buying a new car, buyers will receive a run-down of all of the costs from the dealership that's selling them the vehicle. Sales taxes will be included in that run-down. Buyers who are financing their vehicles can save money over the long haul by including the sales taxes in their initial down payment. Doing so means buyers will only pay interest on the vehicle and not the vehicle as well as the taxes going forward.

### 2. Use a cash back credit card when making your down payment and paying taxes on the vehicle.

Some lenders may not allow down payments to be made in anything but cash, while others accept credit card payments. Car buyers who have cash back credit cards can use those cards when making down payments and/or paying the taxes on the vehicle to reduce the initial costs of buying the car. For example, if a credit card rewards card

### 3 ways to save

1. Pay the taxes upfront.
2. Use a cash back credit card.
3. Carefully read the service contract.

holders with 2 percent cash back on every charged purchase, buyers can then lower the cost of that down payment by 2 percent by simply using their cards when making the payment. Just be sure to pay the balance in full when the bill is due, as credit card interest charges can negate any savings you might earn.

### 3. Carefully read the service contract.

Many dealerships now offer service contracts that can be rolled into monthly payments. These contracts may cover certain maintenance costs as defined in the agreement. Each auto service contract is different, and some may just be offering duplicate coverage already provided by the manufacturers' warranty. Buyers always have the option to decline the service contract and should never agree to it without first reading the entire contract. Requesting to do so can be difficult, as service contracts are often proposed as buyers finalize their financing agreements, and many packages must be accepted on-site before the loan is finalized. But buyers have the right to take their time and read the contracts.

New cars are expensive, but buyers can employ various strategies to save money before signing on the dotted line.

## Standard vehicle maintenance intervals you may want to follow

No two automobiles are the same. So it makes sense that vehicles have different maintenance guidelines. Such guidelines, which include recommendations regarding how frequently oil should be changed and how often tires should be rotated, are typically included in vehicle owner's manuals. Drivers are urged to familiarize themselves with these guidelines, which can protect vehicles as well as the people inside them.

According to CarGurus®, a free internet-based automotive resource, many manufacturers adhere to the 30-60-90 schedule. That schedule recommends everything from inspections to part replacements when vehicles reach 30,000, 60,000 and 90,000 miles. These recommendations are meant to serve as guidelines, and

drivers should know that certain factors can affect how often routine maintenance should occur and when parts must be replaced. For example, harsh driving conditions can lead to excessive wear and tear that causes parts to erode long before owner's manuals suggest they should. As a result, drivers should always speak with their mechanics during service appointments to determine if their vehicles are aging gracefully or if they need a little extra TLC.

Drivers should always read their manuals for recommended service intervals. The following are some general maintenance guidelines, courtesy of CarGurus®, that drivers can keep in mind as the miles pile up on their vehicles' odometers.



**Oil and oil filter:** Many new cars now run on synthetic oil, which tends to last between 5,000 and 10,000 miles. Older vehicles using traditional oil may need to adhere to the once-standard oil change interval of 3,000 miles.

Mechanics will typically replace oil filters with the same frequency as they replace oil.

**Air filter:** Air filters generally need to be replaced every 15,000 to 30,000 miles. However, CarGurus® notes that drivers who park in dusty environments should err on the side of caution and have their air filters replaced every 15,000 miles.

**Fuel filter:** Clogged fuel filters can affect engine performance and even prevent engines from running. Fuel filters may need to be changed at 30,000-mile intervals.

**Battery:** A typical car battery tends to last around four or five years.

**Brake pads:** Worn out

brake pads will make a screeching sound. Brake pads should last around 50,000 miles, though they should be inspected at regular intervals regardless of mileage.

**Brake rotors:** Brake rotors can be resurfaced or replaced, and this should be done around 60,000 miles.

Resurfacing can only be done once and is less expensive than a full replacement.

**Hoses:** Hoses crack over time, but generally do not need to be replaced until they reach the 90,000-mile mark. However, hoses should be inspected routinely, as busted hoses can cause very significant damage.

Recommended maintenance intervals are only intended to serve as guidelines. If drivers notice any changes in vehicle performance, they should consult a mechanic immediately, regardless of how many miles are on their cars or trucks.

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# The benefits to buying a car in person

Technology has changed many things about the way people live their lives, including how they buy their cars.

Whereas trips to the dealership were once inevitable for drivers in the market for new vehicles, the internet is now littered with websites enabling users to buy new cars with the click of a mouse. But buying cars online, and often sight unseen, can be a risky proposition, and there are many reasons why buying new cars in person can benefit buyers.

More than meets the eye: One of the more widely promoted websites that “sells” cars is TrueCar.com. Television ads for TrueCar® are ubiquitous, but viewers might not realize that TrueCar.com is essentially a network of auto dealerships in which member dealerships pay to obtain buyers’ contact information. That’s important information to know for buyers who want to buy a car online so they can cut out the “middleman” (i.e., dealer-

ships).

No surprises: Some online auto dealers promise delivery of the car. That can seem especially convenient, but it’s always in buyers’ best interest to test drive cars before buying them. That’s not always possible when buying vehicles online. While buyers may be able to return cars purchased online after they have been delivered, that can be inconvenient, negating what many feel is the single biggest benefit to buying a car online. When buying cars they have already driven in person, buyers won’t be surprised when getting behind the wheel.

**Savings:** Online dealerships may market themselves as more buyer-friendly than traditional dealerships, but such claims should be taken with a grain of salt. Many can only afford to purchase new vehicles if they get a good deal on an existing trade-in. By visiting dealerships in person, buyers can negotiate a higher trade-in value

than they might be able to get online. In addition, when shopping for new cars, many buyers return to the same dealership where they purchased previous automobiles. An existing relationship with a dealer might make buyers eligible for discounts they’re unlikely to earn when buying cars online.

**Convenience:** Online auto dealerships often cite convenience as one of the biggest feathers in their caps. But it can be more convenient, and considerably less time-consuming, for buyers to simply walk into a dealership and ask to test drive various vehicles. Buyers who visit dealerships can test drive various vehicles in a single morning or afternoon, while those who stick to buying online may have to drive far and wide to drive more than one car in a single day. The tradition of buying cars in person can still pay dividends for buyers accustomed to buying things online.



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### WINTER CAR CARE TIPS

The North Dakota Department of Transportation maintains over 3,000 vehicles during the winter and has some tips on how you can keep your vehicle winter ready:

- Batteries are much weaker in cold weather, so keep your vehicle’s battery fully charged.
- Tires should have M+S or All Season tread and be in good condition.
- Brakes should be checked and serviced if necessary. Even braking on all four wheels will lessen the chance of skids on slippery roads.
- Make sure your vehicle’s exhaust system has no leaks. Carbon monoxide is a silent killer and can accumulate quickly in closed vehicles.
- Make sure your wiper blades are in good condition. Keep the windshield washer reservoir filled with antifreeze solvent.
- Check the radiator, heater core and all hoses that carry anti-freeze solution to see that they are in good condition and free of leaks. Also check to see that the solution is good to at least 40 below zero.
- Make sure you have winter weight oil (usually 5W-30) in the engine.
- Emergencies can happen when you least expect them, so be sure to carry a winter survival kit in your vehicle.

### WINTER SURVIVAL KIT

- Several blankets or a sleeping bag and warm clothing, such as parka, boots, long underwear, heavy socks, mittens, ski mask.
- A source of heat, such as a multiple wick candle can heater. It is best to also have matches to light your candle, because some lighters won’t work in extreme cold.
- Water and a metal container suitable for melting ice or snow to be used for drinking water.
- A radio and flashlight with extra batteries.
- Food, such as hard candy, jellybeans, raisins, nuts, candy bars, dehydrated fruit, and jerky.
- Something to read to help keep you awake.
- A folding cup.
- Toilet tissue.
- Bright red or orange cloth and whistle to signal help.
- Nylon rope.



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## Is there a “best time” to buy or sell a vehicle?

The automotive industry is big business. According to the Statista Research Department, roughly 79 million cars and light trucks are expected to be sold worldwide by the end of 2019.

When buying or selling a vehicle, many people wonder if there is a particularly advantageous time to buy or sell. The best time to sell is not necessarily the best time to buy, which can present problems for vehicle owners who need to sell their current cars in order to afford new ones. Industry insiders offer their input on key times to move vehicles.

### When to sell

Cars depreciate quite a bit the moment they move off of the lot. Most lose upwards of 20 percent of their value within the first year, according to Edmunds, a leading automotive information company and pricing index. Certain things contribute to depreciation, including mileage, type of driving and whether the car was maintained or not.

Sometimes the best times for a person to sell are when it no longer is financially prudent to keep the vehicle. For some, this may mean when the bumper-to-bumper warranty expires or if mileage starts to tick up, adversely affecting resale value.

The time of year to sell that is most favorable is between the months of March through August, offers U.S.

News and World Report.

When temperatures start to climb, people begin thinking about warm-weather and getting outdoors. This is a time of year when tax refunds are issued, and it is far enough away from the holidays to make big purchases more affordable.

### When to buy

Kelley Blue Book® says that most dealerships do their biggest “wheeling and dealing” toward the end of the calendar year. November and December are some of their most profitable months, and consumers who are able to budget for a new vehicle at this time of year can get great prices. Dealers want to carry over as little inventory as possible into the new year, so some are motivated to negotiate more on the current year models, enabling them to make room for new inventory and meet existing sales projections.

The financial resource Bankrate says the day of the week one chooses to buy also may be something to consider.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are slow days at many dealerships, which may make negotiating a deal easier. Shopping holiday sales, such as those on Black Friday or New Year’s Eve, also can help consumers earn better deals.

Timing is everything in the vehicle market. Learn the best times to buy or sell a vehicle and reap the rewards.

## Properly pack a car emergency kit

After home and work, the next most common place people spend their time is in their vehicles. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety says the average American spends 17,600 minutes driving each year. Statistics Canada indicates that most of the Canadian population averages 1.2 hours per day behind the wheel.

Because they spend so much time behind the wheel, drivers need to be prepared for breakdowns. Packing an emergency kit in the car can help people make the best of such situations.

A car emergency kit can help drivers get back on the road promptly. Without such kits, drivers may be stranded for hours after a breakdown. Emergency kits also come in handy during weather-related events that can sideline cars until roads become passable. Getting caught in a vehicle during a snowstorm and failing to have the proper gear can be a life-threatening scenario under extreme conditions.

It is always wise to plan for the worst and hope for the best. The Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Homeland Security note that these key items should always be included in a car emergency kit.



- durable bags or crates to store supplies
- complete first aid kit
- small fire extinguisher
- jumper cables
- rain ponchos
- plastic tarp
- flashlights and extra batteries
- bottled water
- small cache of nonperishable foods
- wrench and pliers
- local maps
- rags
- duct tape
- multipurpose tool
- ice scraper
- automotive fluids
- blankets/warm clothing
- cat litter for slick roads
- tire-changing equipment

- spare tire
- road flares or caution reflectors
- empty, refillable gas canister
- cash for gas
- phone charger cable

Being prepared can make a difference when vehicles are sidelined. In addition to an emergency kit, cars and trucks should be regularly maintained to prevent breakdowns. This includes ensuring all fluids are at proper levels, filters are changed, batteries are in good working order, and tires are inflated correctly. Investing in a roadside assistance service also can help get drivers back on the road quickly.

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## Why do brake rotors warp?

Braking systems are comprised of various components, including rotors. Rotors are large metal discs that can be seen behind the wheels of the car. Rotors can sometimes appear to warp, and many drivers may question why this occurs or if this is a significant problem.

Rotors cannot really warp. Automotive experts note that rotors are metal discs that are cast under extreme heat conditions. It would take a similar application of heat by the braking system for rotors to actually bend, which is impossible. Other factors make rotors appear to be warped, so describing such rotors as “warped” is an easy way to explain the problem to vehicle owners.

For brakes to work correctly, brake pads must be applied squarely and evenly against the rotor. But friction can cause some brake pad materials to form residue on certain areas of the rotor, eventually contributing to uneven rotor surface levels. Some spots become thicker, while others may thin out.

Drivers’ own habits, including their braking tendencies, can contribute to uneven rotors. The automotive advice resource Your Mechanic says that riding the brakes for prolonged periods of time can cause hot brake pads to “paint” the rotors. So constant braking should be avoided. Drivers also can shift into a

lower gear when driving downhill so that prolonged breaking is unnecessary. Also, avoiding frequent hard braking may help. People who live in an area where they’re hard on the brakes either because of hilly terrain or traffic may find such environments can take a toll on the performance of their vehicles’ brake systems.

Brake system issues, such as front brakes having to work harder than rear brakes, or over-torqueing when wheels are installed, also may cause rotors to warp, advise automotive experts at Kal Tires. Moss Motoring also states that new pads and brake pads need to be fitted correctly and properly “bedded.” Bedding is the initial transfer of friction material from pad to the disc to form a smooth, uniform layer. Break-in instructions should be included with new brake installation.

Warped rotors can cause symptoms such as squeaky sounds and lead to jittery feelings in the car when brakes are applied. Such rotors also can cause the vehicle to vibrate when coming to a stop.

If warped rotors seem to be an issue, mechanics may be able to put thicker rotors into a lathe to smooth out the residue and restore an even surface - but the problem can come back. It is usually best to replace rotors if they are causing severe vibrations or issues when braking.

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## BSC automotive grads in demand, earning six figures

Bismarck State College's two automotive programs – Automotive Technology and Automotive Collision – check all the boxes for an ideal career: High demand. Great pay. Good work. The one drawback? You might get a little dirty. But it's well worth it.

"Our work can't be outsourced, our people are in demand, and it's a good income. I know auto collision techs in this town doing six figures – and they aren't the shop owners, they're the technicians," says Richard Bahm, Assistant Professor of Automotive Collision Technology.

Lee Friese, associate professor of Automotive Technology, agrees. "I'm getting phone calls as far as Iowa looking for technicians. We see very large demand - not just in auto field but because of the types of skillsets, in mechanical maintenance type jobs, too.

Friese says the retirement of baby boomers is driving the demand too. "There's a dire need for this work and it's getting more serious."

In early 2019, 276 million vehicles were operating on roads throughout the United States according to statista.com, and growing at a rate of about 17 million vehicles per year. More cars mean more jobs.

"This is a very, very strong job market," Bahm reiterates. "I've got salesmen and paint reps who travel through looking for good students or technicians. They're calling me from Dickinson and Moorhead. They need two technicians in Bowman, and Washburn needs a guy."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects more than 1,300,000 careers in the transportation industry by 2026; that's over 125,000 job openings expected each year.

"This is an industry where jobs don't get shipped overseas. As vehicles on roads increase, jobs increase. Part of it is baby boomers retiring in the next three - five years," Friese says.

Students are often hired before they even graduate. BSC graduate John Vandal was hired by Eide Collision Center in 2017, during his second year in the Automotive Tech-

nology program. He'd already completed the Auto Collision program.

"I enjoyed school way more than I thought I would, so I kept going."

His younger brother is currently in BSC's Auto Technology program. They grew up building small engines and go karts in Langdon, N.D., and hope to open a shop together down the road focused on restoring cars and custom jobs.

For now, Vandal enjoys the work, and the perks of experience. "Once you get the hang of it, you can go on commission. What I earn is based on how many projects I get done and the time they take."

He recommends BSC's programs to anyone. "If you enjoy cars, there's a lot of potential. There's always a need for a mechanic or auto tech, and I'm always busy."

### Fast Facts

#### Automotive Technology

- Two-year program
- Limited enrollment program

•Students learn eight instructional areas certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation

•All BSC instructors are Master ASE certified

•Students learn how to repair automotive, mechanical and electrical systems.

•Studies include electronics, fuel delivery systems, transmissions, clutches, ignition systems, braking and steering systems, transaxles, drive trains, heating/air conditioning diagnosis and emission control systems.

#### Automotive Collision Technology

- 11-month program
- Limited enrollment program

•Students learn eight instructional areas certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation

•All BSC instructors are Master ASE certified

•Students train in metal finishing, frame straightening, welding, painting and glass replacement using modern, specialized equipment

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