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Travelers need to use caution in high temperatures

Basic trip check can help avoid roadside breakdowns

MEDFORD — With the National Weather Service forecasting triple-digit heat this weekend in southern Oregon and northern California, families embarking on vacation getaways and other summer travelers are urged to plan ahead and take precaution to avoid overheating.

The NWS reminds people to stay hydrated as temperatures rise. For their most up to date forecast, visit <http://weather.gov/medford>.

“The summer sun and heat can dehydrate drivers on long trips,” said ODOT Maintenance Manager Everett Carroll.

Roadside breakdowns

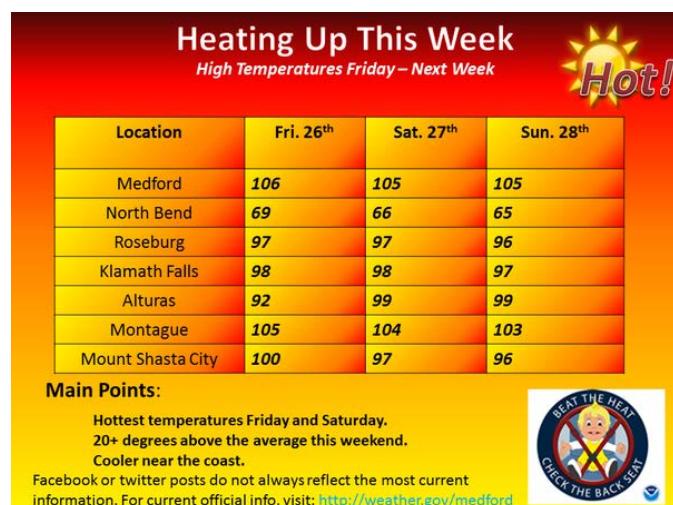
There’s no way sure-fire way to prevent roadside breakdowns but many problems can be avoided with a basic trip check. Carry a roadside safety kit in your vehicle, so you are prepared whether it’s a flat tire, a break down, a crash accident or aiding another stranded motorist.

Your first priority if your car breaks down is to move to a safe place before getting out. Never get out of the vehicle to make a repair or examine the damage on the spot. In the case of a blowout or a flat tire, move your vehicle to a safer place before attempting a repair — even if it means destroying the wheel getting there.

“If you are hearing a noise, don’t keep driving,” said Carroll. “We’ve found many people with their engines blown up because they just keep pushing their vehicle further down the highway.”

Preparing your vehicle is critical before traveling in mountainous areas or in hazardous weather conditions. Before leaving, tell a family member or friend of your planned route and when you anticipate arriving. Keep them updated on any changes.

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The Siskiyou Pass is a challenging section of Interstate 5 that climbs to 4,310 feet from the Oregon-California border to the city of Ashland. Motorists encounter four more major passes, each higher than 1,700 feet, along a 22-mile stretch of I-5 in Josephine and Douglas counties.

Mountain elevations on Interstate 5

I-5 Summit	Elevation
• Canyon Creek Pass Summit	2,020
• Stage Road Pass Summit	1,830
• Smith Hill Summit	1,730
• Sexton Summit	1,960
• Siskiyou Summit	4,310

“The chance of overheating increases on mountain passes, especially if you use your air conditioner,” said Carroll. “If your engine overheats, pull over to let it cool down. You can avoid stress by readying your car before you go and by carrying plenty of water for you and your car.”

Drive at night, or leave bright and early

Travel at night when possible as the cooler air enables you to travel farther with minimum danger of heat exhaustion

“Parents can make their trip a more peaceful experience if they either drive at night, or take the early morning wake-up call,” said State Farm Insurance agent Larry Nicholson. “That allows children to travel in comfort, in their pajamas, and settle down to sleep in the back seats.”

Hot weather and children

You don’t have to travel through California’s deserts — the Mojave, Death Valley, Owens Valley — to understand the need for precaution when children are in a vehicle. Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open. An outside temperature of 101 degrees can easily result in an interior temperature of 140 degrees.

Safe Kids Oregon, founded in 1995 and led by Oregon Public Health, reminds motorists that hot weather and vehicles can be a deadly combination.

- Within 10 minutes, a vehicle’s internal temperature can rise by 20 degrees.
- Cracking a window does little to keep the car cool.
- A child’s body temperature can rise up to five times faster than an adult’s.
- A child dies when his/her temperature reaches 107 degrees.