



Be prepared

TAKE THE HASSLE OUT OF HOLIDAYS

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



It's school holiday time and for many families that may mean the first road trip in a long time.

Driving is an economical and fun way to create a memorable holiday but, whether you're going off road or glamping, things won't always turn out how you planned.

So, here are my tips to get you there safely.

Before heading off, check you have a roadworthy spare tyre and wheel on board, and you know how to change it.

Never change a tyre on the side of the road if there's traffic close to your vehicle. Call a breakdown service instead.

Inspect all tyres for wear and ensure they are inflated to the recommended pressure — that goes for trailers and caravans, too.

If towing a caravan, trailer or boat, connect it properly, checking all lights work, and you have correctly positioned the driving mirrors.

Also, make sure you know how to safely manoeuvre your vehicle and the load behind.

If your skills need brushing up, practise before you leave home.

Fill up your tank and carry spare fuel in a safe container if you visit remote areas.

Keep a first aid kit in your vehicle and a portable phone charger. Take cash, a torch and spare batteries, blankets and water. Carrying jumper leads is also essential.

Importantly, tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back.

There will be lots of people on the roads during the holidays. Be patient, be courteous, and take regular rest breaks.

That way we can all have a fun and safe holiday.

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce

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CORVETTE MUSCLES IN

ROADSIDE ASSIST

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

Re the 2022 Chevrolet Corvette, what date will it arrive here? And will Australia get different power choices or are we shafted with just one model?

Tony Sheehan, email

The right-hand-drive C8 Corvette Stingray is due to arrive in showrooms this month, but the first batch – priced from \$144,990 plus charges – has already sold out. You can register interest or find your nearest dealer at gmspecialityvehicles.com. The Stingray has a 370kW/637Nm 6.2-litre mid-mounted V8, good for a claimed 2.9-second sprint to 100km/h. Not sure this engine is “shafting” us, but if you need more, a Z06 version with naturally-aspirated 500kW V8 with 8600rpm redline arrives here in about a year's time.

'VETTE BILLS

Where does GMSV (Australian outfit General Motors Special Vehicles) get its “about \$150,000” price for a base model 2022 Corvette which costs \$59,000 in the US? At current exchange rates that makes it about \$80,000, so why the \$70k mark-up? It surely can't cost that much to import them? I'm a 1979 Corvette C3 owner and love these cars.

Bill Thompson, email

The local Corvette is definitely expensive compared with the US version, but \$150,000 for a mid-engine supercar that cracks 100km/h in less than three seconds isn't outrageous when you compare it to Italian supercars with similar performance. Our ridiculous luxury car tax makes up a part of the price and we're also getting the high-spec as standard, including the Z51 Performance Package with uprated suspension, brakes, exhaust and limited slip differential. That car would sell for roughly \$US75,000 or \$105,000 here. Granted these Corvettes don't need local conversion as they come right-hand drive from the US factory, but the expense Chevrolet has undertaken to develop right-hand drive for a relatively small market must also be considered.



STICK OR TWIST?

I own a 2018 LDV T60 always serviced with the dealer. I've raised a few issues which I believe should be covered under warranty. The dealer has advised that should they inspect it and it's not a warrantable item I'd be charged a fee of around \$160. Thankfully every fault I've raised has been covered. I believe this potential charge will discourage owners from reporting minor warranty concerns. Is this common across all new car dealers?

Michael Maloney, email

It depends on the dealership and the type of warranty claim. They're a business, so they need to bill for their time. If they diagnose a problem that transpires has been caused by damage, modifications or misuse of the vehicle – non-warrantable things, basically – the customer should pay for their work. That said, if it's something obvious (to a mechanic) such as a failing car battery I'd hope common sense would prevail and they'd not charge \$160 for such a service.

START ROLLING

Re: failed Range Rover control arm bushes at 51,000km, this is a very common occurrence on city-driven SUVs. A consequence of constantly turning 275mm-wide tyres under a 2200kg SUV while it's stationary; you should only turn the steering wheel when the road wheels are rolling. It was physically impossible before power steering, but these days all the stresses and loads go somewhere, largely into scrubbing tyres and squashing bushes.

Pete Maddison, email

Good point. I've heard this referred to as “dry steering” and it is tough on your tyres and the car's front-end components because you grind the tyres into the ground as they turn. It's true for cars as well as heavy SUVs – roll before turning the steering wheel for less stress and longer tyre life.

MY LEFT FOOT

Re: left foot braking, I was taught it in 1990 at Jim Murcott's Advanced Driving Centre. With the left foot over the brake I've been able to brake instantly when reversing out of our driveway, including when a toddler went behind the car.

Colin Bridgford, email

Re: left foot braking, hill starts are certainly easier this way. But an annoyance is drivers leaving their foot on the brake while accelerating. It's very confusing and dangerous when you follow a car with its brake lights continuously on.

Anthony Boyton, email

Re: left foot braking, every now and then someone who drives an automatic car will need to drive a manual and do an emergency stop. Bang on the clutch pedal and bang into what they're trying to avoid. A little kid maybe.

Greg Wilson, email

It's a sad possibility, as is hitting the accelerator instead of the brake with your right foot in an automatic. Pedal confusion happens – sometimes with tragic outcomes – and drivers must decide what's best and safest for them. Personally, I've never hit a clutch expecting it to be a brake, but once stood on an automatic car's brake pedal when trying to push in a non-existent clutch. I wasn't proud of that one. Auto emergency braking will hopefully mitigate many pedal confusion accidents – the technology is very common on modern cars, and mandatory on new ones launched from March 1, 2023.

STUPID QUESTIONS

I always look forward to your weekly advice page for interesting reading and a good laugh. How you don't tear your hair out with some of the inane, stupid questions you get asked is beyond me.

Rob Leary, email

I'll take inane questions over abuse any day. I've been called an idiot, corrupt, biased and irrelevant (and worse), but the questions and comments are always welcome and mainly excellent. You should see some of the ones we don't publish!

BRING YOUR OWN

Like a previous letter writer, my Jeep dealer also charged \$225 for 7.5 litres of engine oil. Instead, I supply my own correct specification Castrol diesel oil which I buy for \$80 – a saving of \$135. At my 80,000km capped price service I noted charges of \$78 per litre for gear oil and auto trans fluid, way over the top. Be aware there can be big savings in supplying your own synthetic oil.

Barry Anderson, email

As long as the dealership uses high quality oil, most of us accept a bit of a mark-up. What's abhorrent is gross overcharging and then slinging rubbish, cheap oil in your engine. You're the customer so you've every right to ask them to use your supplied oil, but as a courtesy check with them first. If they refuse, make sure they offer a decent reason.

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