

# THE ULTIMATE CAR SAFETY GUIDE



**PRINT** this step-by-step guide and keep it with your car's emergency kit.



Way of Life!

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# 01 INTRODUCTION

**While we all expect our cars to never let us down, sometimes we encounter a few hiccups.**

This guide will help you troubleshoot some common car problems, so that you can tell the difference between a DIY or knowing whether or not you need to contact the mechanic. It also covers some basic driving tips to keep you and your loved ones safe on the road.

# VEHICLE EMERGENCY 101

**Sometimes car trouble can pick the worst possible time ... like when you're already running late for a meeting.**

Knowing when you're faced with something serious (that requires a mechanic) and when you can get by with a quick hack using common household items could save you many hours of frustration in an emergency. It also covers some basic driving tips to keep you and your loved ones safe on the road.

## 01

### CAR TROUBLE HACKS: QUICK FIXES TO KEEP MOVING

It's not always possible (or necessary) to go straight to a mechanic - in fact, **Women on Wheels** shared some excellent hacks using common household items, to keep you on the move.



**PROBLEM:** a pesky stone has chipped your windscreen

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Windscreen chips, as innocuous as they may seem, can quickly get out of hand. A small chip can develop into a full-blown crack almost overnight - and cracks are both dangerous and costly to repair.



**SOLUTION:** clear nail polish

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The nail polish prevents the chip from cracking further. While nail polish is far from a permanent fix, it will buy you some time to get to a windscreen repair specialist.

**PROBLEM:** car polish on your windscreen

Getting polish on your windscreen may not be an emergency - but it's a hazard none the less (and a real pain to remove). The polish hinders your ability to see clearly, and could lead to an accident if not removed.

**SOLUTION:** nail polish remover

Believe it or not, a small amount of nail polish remover on a cloth will clear your windscreen right up. Problem solved!

**PROBLEM:** a leaky radiator

This one's quite a biggy, as a leaking radiator can cause your car to overheat - putting your engine at serious risk of seizure.

**SOLUTION:** an egg, some turmeric or some curry powder

Turmeric is used in the production of radiator sealants, so it can be used as a temporary fix to get you to your mechanic (this can be substituted with curry powder if need be). You can also use an egg white to form a plug, as the heat of your radiator cooks the egg - sealing the gaps.

Neither solution is a good long term solution - so we recommend plugging the leak and heading straight to your nearest mechanic.

**PROBLEM:** a build up of lead sulphate on your battery

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If you notice a strange white substance covering your battery, you probably have a lead sulphate build up. This can corrode your battery terminals, and could cause your car's electronics to malfunction.

**SOLUTION:** a can of coke and an old toothbrush

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Put on a pair of safety gloves (you should have one in your car's emergency kit - we'll discuss this later on) and disconnect your battery.

Once your battery is disconnected, dip the toothbrush in some coke (yes, the soft drink) and scrub the lead build up off the battery. Once the battery looks clean, take a damp cloth and wipe off the coke residue. Let it dry off, and reconnect the battery.

**PROBLEM:** sun damage to your headlights

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The sun's rays can damage your headlights, causing them to become murky over time.

**SOLUTION:** toothpaste

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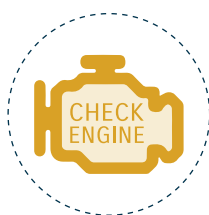
Squeeze some toothpaste onto a cloth and polish your lights. The toothpaste will clear up the murky appearance, allowing your headlights to shine brightly and improving your visibility when driving at night.

For more serious cases of car trouble, you may need to do some investigation into the problem. If you notice any unusual lights pop up on your dashboard, it could be time to visit a mechanic...

## 02

### WHAT YOUR WARNING LIGHTS MEAN

It's always quite frightening when one of those blissfully grey symbols on your dashboard lights up and lets you know there's something wrong under the bonnet. Here we decipher those mystery symbols for you (though you can find explanations for all of them in your car's hand book).



#### ENGINE WARNING LIGHT

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This is possibly the most important one to look out for: the engine warning light means that your vehicle's engine needs immediate attention. In some vehicles it will come on as a steady red or orange light showing an engine symbol, and in others it has the words 'check engine' included.

Whether it's flashing or just glowing, you should contact your dealership immediately. Don't drive your car any further if this light comes on - contact the manufacturer and they will instruct you what to do.



## OIL REQUIRED

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Sometimes confused with a magic lamp, this symbol means your vehicle is running low on oil. You should take your car to the closest service station and check the oil immediately. Ignoring this one could cause your engine to fail completely, which will be a very expensive oversight.



## BRAKE SYSTEM WARNING LIGHT

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This simple exclamation mark alerts you that something is not right with the brake system – it could mean that your handbrake is still engaged, or it could mean that your brake system is faulty – it all depends on the type of vehicle you drive. As a rule of thumb: if your handbrake is not engaged and this light is still showing, you should contact the manufacturer immediately. Don't drive the vehicle if there's a chance your brake system is faulty.



## ABS (ANTI-LOCK BRAKING SYSTEM) LIGHT

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Many new vehicles will have an ABS light, as well as a brake light (above) – in these cases the brake light will apply only to the handbrake and the ABS will relate to the vehicle braking system. If your ABS light comes on it means your ABS system is not functioning correctly and should be checked as soon as possible as it could affect vehicle safety.





## SERVICE REQUIRED

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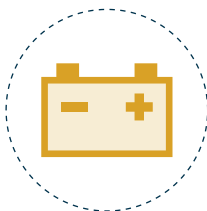
The vehicle service light sees more creative licence among manufacturers. Some will have a vehicle and spanner tool symbol, other will just show a spanner. And in many newer cars it simply comes up saying 'service required / schedule service'. If you see this one, contact your dealership and make arrangements to have your car serviced as soon as possible - you don't want to leave it too long as going too far over your scheduled service date / mileage could affect your vehicle warranty and also lead to damage.



## TEMPERATURE WARNING LIGHT

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Often called the 'ship's mast' the temperature warning light must be taken seriously. This light indicates that your engine's temperature is running too high, and could be due to insufficient water or coolant. You don't want to drive with an overheating engine, and most manufacturers advise to switch the vehicle off immediately and arrange to have it towed to your dealership if this warning light comes on.



## BATTERY WARNING LIGHT

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This symbol means your vehicle battery is faulty or needs to be replaced. In many modern cars you can no longer access the battery, so it means you need to take your vehicle to a dealership. It's also not one you want to ignore as you need the battery to start the car.



## WINDSHIELD WASHER FLUID

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This symbol, often confused with a butterfly, means your windshield washer fluid needs to be filled. You can do this at any service station. It's best to keep it topped up as you don't want to get stuck next to the road trying to clean mud off your windscreen just to see where you're going.



## SEAT BELT INDICATOR LIGHT

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This symbol means that one or more of your passengers (or even the driver) is not wearing their seatbelt. It's often accompanied by an audible warning as well.



## AIRBAG WARNING LIGHT

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The airbag warning light differs across brands, but it usually indicates that one or more airbags have been disengaged (if you have child seats), or that there is a problem with the airbag system. If you have not disengaged one or more airbags in order to fit a child seat, you should have your airbag system checked immediately.



## DOOR INDICATOR LIGHT

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It looks like a car with wings, but simply means that one or more of the vehicle doors have not been closed properly. In some cases the same light will also indicate if the boot is open, but many vehicles have a separate light showing if the boot lid is not secured.






## FUEL LIGHT

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Many vehicles have a fuel gauge showing the fuel level, as well as fuel light that will come on when you are dangerously low on fuel. Don't try to push the limits and see how far you can go with the fuel light on, you can cause damage to the engine or get stuck at the worst possible time.

**As a 'rule of thumb' the colour of the warning light indicates how serious the situation is.**

-  Red means the vehicle should not be driven any further and needs to be towed if the light remains on.
-  Orange or yellow means action is required, but you can still drive the car within reason (such as the service light).
-  Green is usually reserved for pure information, rather than warnings (such as time, temperature, or speed).

If, for some reason, you didn't notice one of these emergency lights, and your car subsequently breaks down, you'll be grateful to have an emergency kit on hand.

It can take hours for your roadside assistance to arrive - so make sure you're fully prepared for any worst-case scenarios. Here's a list of what you need in your car's emergency kit.

## 03

### WHAT TO PACK IN YOUR CAR EMERGENCY KIT

Whether you drive 5km a day or 50km, keeping an updated emergency kit in your car can be a life-saving decision.

They're called 'accidents' for a reason - we don't plan them, but the moment you get into a car, you're at risk. It sounds harsh, but that's the reality, and keeping an emergency kit in your car can quickly become one of the most important decisions of your life. **Below are the essentials:**



#### EMERGENCY TRIANGLE

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Some of the most serious accidents occur when a stationary vehicle is hit by another going at full speed. If your car breaks down or is stationary on any portion of a public road, switch your hazard lights on immediately. Your triangle must then be placed on the roadway at least 45m from the back of the vehicle, facing traffic approaching from the rear. This ensures that your car is visible to other motorists, giving them time to slow down.

Having an emergency triangle is a legal requirement in South Africa. Motorists need to have at least one double-sided reflective triangle, to SABS specifications, in their cars at all the times.

Vehicles first registered before 1 July 2006 (when this law only applied to commercial vehicles) are exempt from the rule, however it's in your best interest to carry one anyway. New vehicles come with an emergency triangle, but many people don't know where it's kept in their car. Consider it part of your emergency kit, and make sure you know how it works (some can be tricky to unfold).



## FIRE EXTINGUISHER

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This is so important, and so many drivers don't think to keep an extinguisher in their car. There are many small extinguishers available, and they're easy to store within easy reach. Just remember to check the expiry date on your fire extinguisher regularly. In the event of an accident, or if you come across an accident where a vehicle is on fire, a fire extinguisher can mean the difference between life or death. Fire spreads quickly, and in most cases the fire department simply can't get to the scene fast enough, often due to traffic conditions.



## FIRST AID KIT

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Many vehicles can be specified with a first aid kit, and these are often very handy. In some cases you may want to add a few extras. For example, if anyone in your family has serious medical conditions, it's a good idea to keep critical medicines in the car. That said, lots of medication can't be stored in a hot car, but depending on your needs, there may be alternatives you can keep on hand that could buy you some time in the event of an emergency. Your first aid kit should contain the essentials: latex gloves, bandages, plasters, scissors and antiseptic.

Many people who have done standard CPR courses carry extras such as a CPR mouthpiece so that they're able to help in the event of an accident.

There are **numerous pre-packed first aid kits** available.



## EXTERNAL CELL PHONE CHARGER

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Many of us charge our phones in the car, but if you get stuck next to the road with an unresponsive vehicle, the last thing you want to see is 0% battery on your phone. Keep a pre-charged external battery in your car – the odds may seem low, but you'll be extremely grateful when you do need it. Keep in mind that these lose their charge over time.



## SNACKS AND WATER

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This may sound a bit 'survivor', but we refer back to the term 'accident'. Do a quick survey amongst your friends and colleagues and you'll most likely find someone who managed to get stuck next to the road for hours.

An overturned truck on the highway can have the same effect, leaving you sitting in your car with nowhere to go. If you have children with you, it's even more important to keep them hydrated (and happy) while you wait for help, or for an accident scene to be cleared.

Drivers who suffer from conditions such as low blood sugar should be especially vigilant to ensure their 'emergency snacks' are always well stocked.



## FLASHLIGHT

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We've all seen those horror movies! Make sure you have a decent flashlight, and regularly check the batteries. Horror movies aside, a flashlight could save your life in the event of an accident at night. It can help you check for serious injuries, find your cellphone or first aid kit. It may also be needed to flag down help or identify your position if your vehicle left the road during the accident. It's a must-have in any car.



## COPY OF YOUR DRIVER'S LICENCE AND MEDICAL AID DETAILS

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This is an excellent habit – keep a certified copy of your driver's licence in your emergency kit, as well as medical aid and contact details. If you're involved in a serious accident, and first responders can't access your phone or find your wallet / purse, they're likely to check your emergency kit for details. It's simply extra insurance.



## JUMPER CABLES

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No car is perfect, and even a brand new luxury sedan can still suffer from a flat battery. In some cases this may mean being towed in (in some new cars the battery is not accessible), but in many cases you'll be able to jump start the car. Keep a set of jumper cables in your emergency kit.



## TYRE REPAIR KIT

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A **tyre repair kit** is one of the most important items to keep in your car. A flat tyre is not only frustrating, but if you get stuck on the wrong road (or a busy one), it can be extremely dangerous. Most tyre repair kits are a quick fix and will at least allow you to drive to the nearest service station.

Depending on your driving routes and habits, as well as whether you normally have children in the car or not, you can adapt your emergency kit to suit your needs. The above items, however, should be standard fare.



# HOW TO RESOLVE THE FOUR MOST COMMON CAR PROBLEMS

(WITH STEP-BY-STEP INFOGRAPHICS)

If you want to save yourself the hassle of waiting for your roadside assistance, here's some simple instructions to help you **fix four of the most common car problems** you're likely to encounter.



## HOW TO JUMP START A CAR

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## HOW TO SORT OUT AN OVERHEATING CAR

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## HOW TO CHANGE A TYRE

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## HOW TO FIX A PUNCTURE

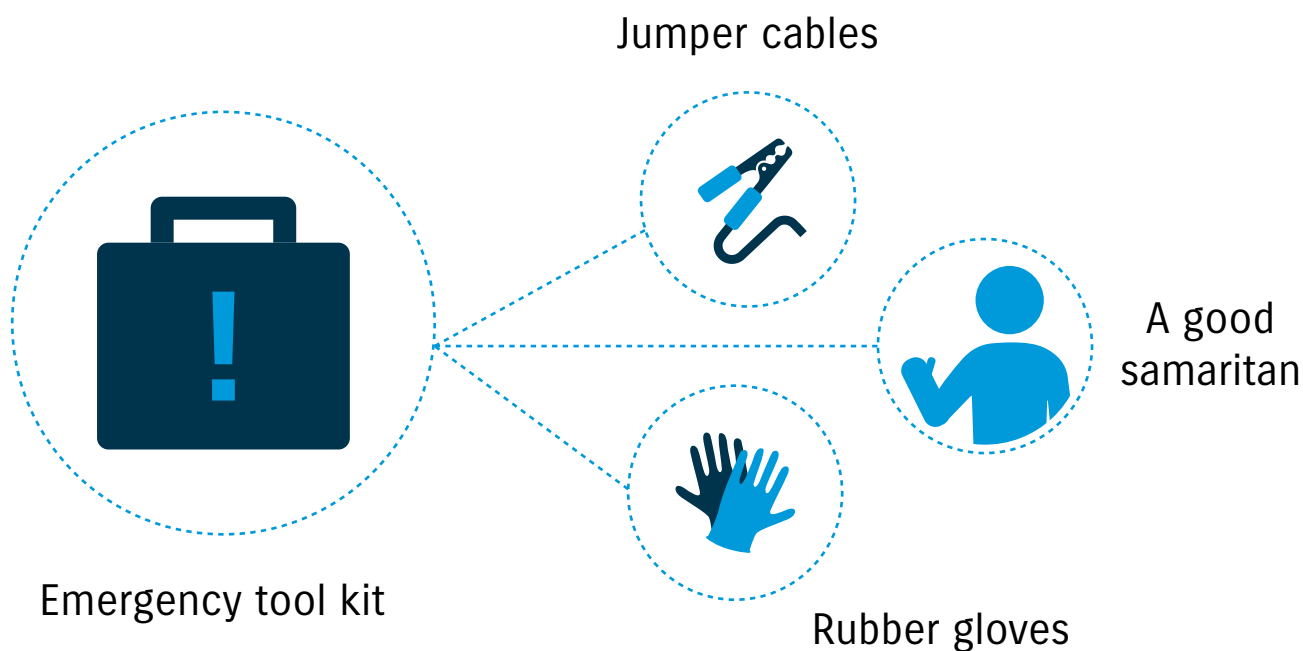
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# HOW TO JUMP START A CAR

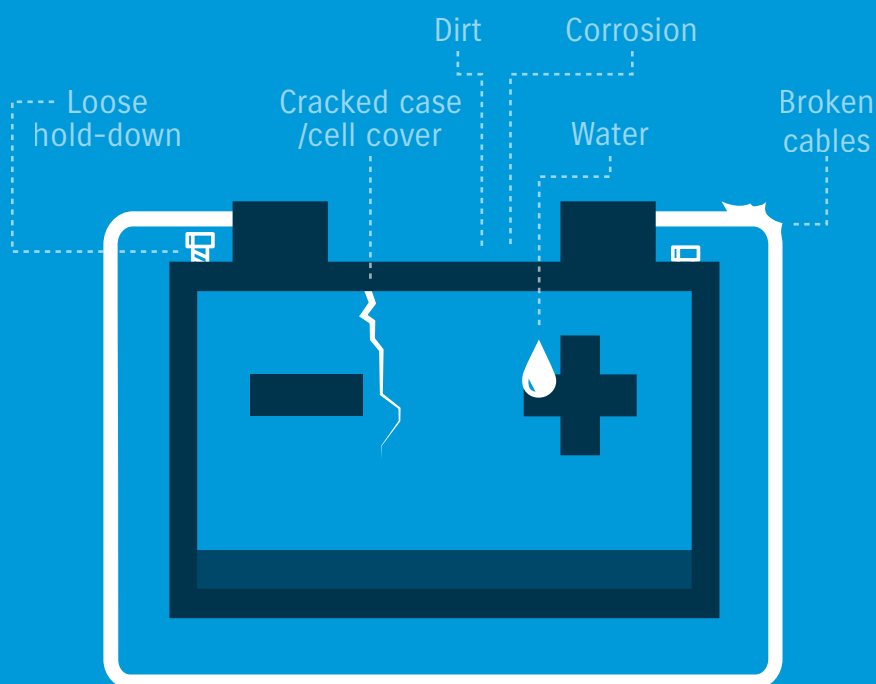
Dead battery got you down? Don't worry, we've got you covered. Here's everything you need to know about jump starting your car safely.

## Keep a set of jumper cables in your emergency kit, and:



**TIP:** Don't skimp on a low budget set of jumper cables, we recommend that you buy a decent set of jumper cables.

# Examine your battery.

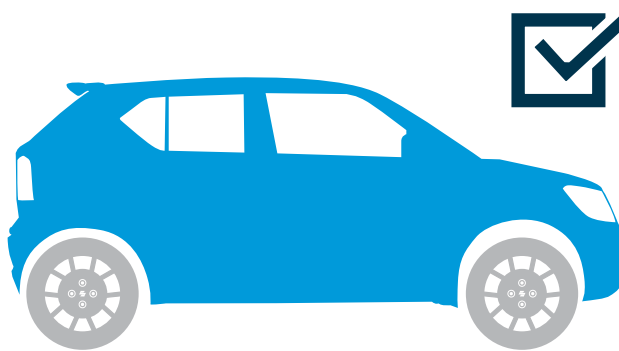


Before you jump start your car, check for any obvious damage. If there's no obvious damage, you'll need to find another motorist to help you jump start your car.

## Safety tips

# 01

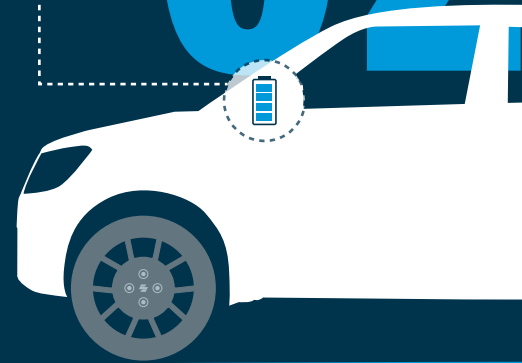
**Read your owner's manual** to find out whether your car's manufacturer allows jump starting or not (if not, it could void your warranty).





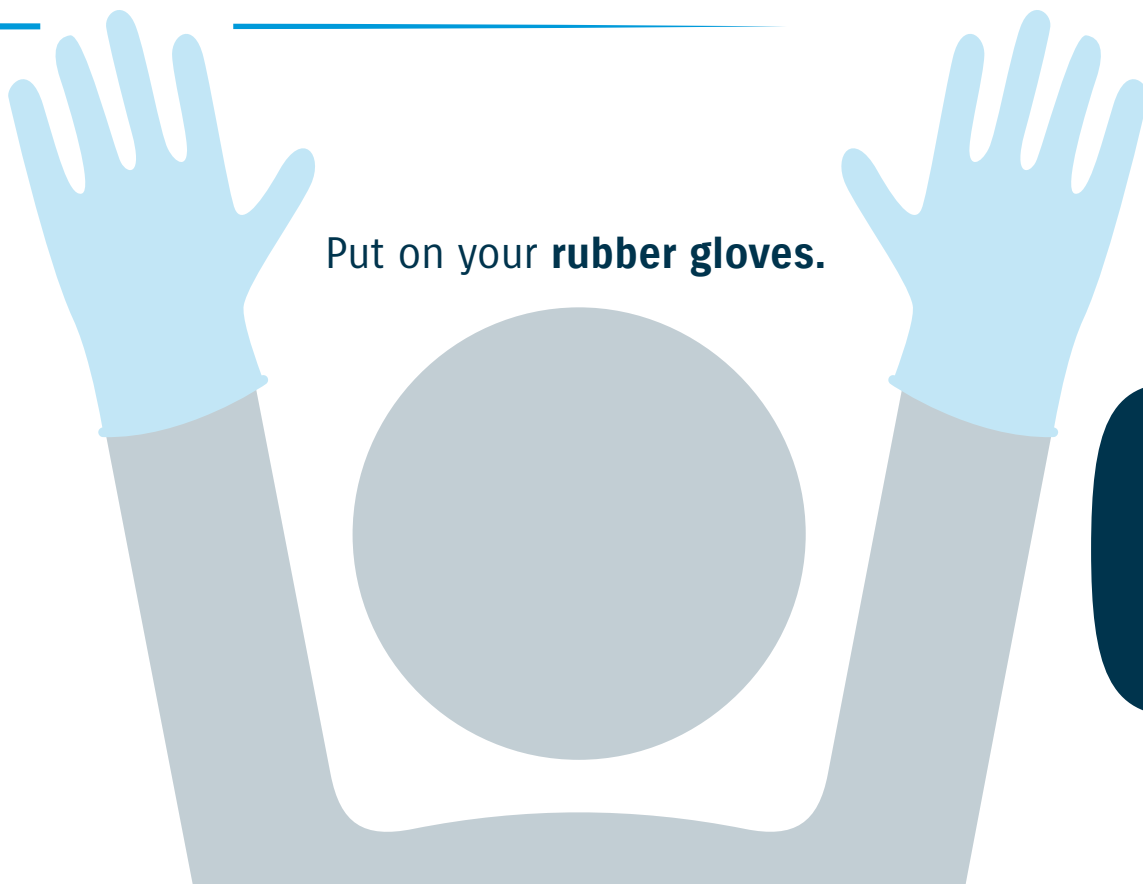
**Unplug any accessories**  
(like cell phone chargers, GPS devices, and so on) that could short out during a power surge.

02



03

**Switch off all lights** (including hazard lights and indicators), radio and windscreen wipers, in both cars.

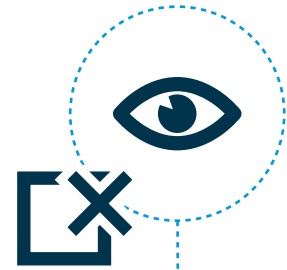
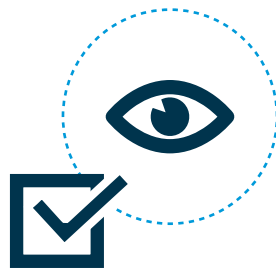


Put on your **rubber gloves**.

04

# 05

Don't lean over the battery.



**Never jump start a frozen battery**  
- you could cause an explosion.

# 06



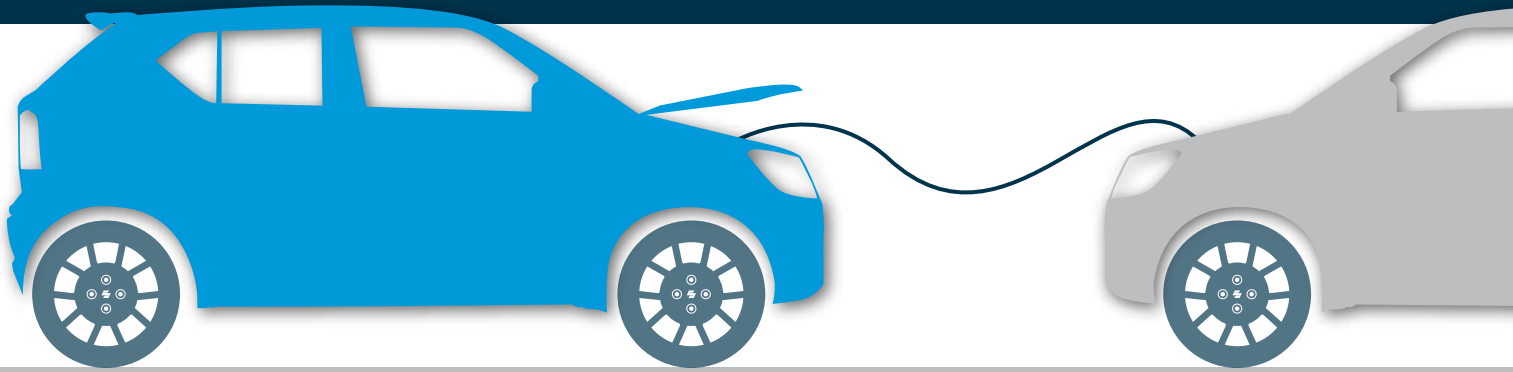
# 07

Always remove the negative (-) cables on the jumper lead first and replace them last.

# 7 simple steps to safely jump start your car

# 01

Get your **good samaritan** to park their car close enough to yours so that the jumper cables can reach comfortably.



# 02

Place both cars in park/neutral and make sure **both ignitions are switched off.**



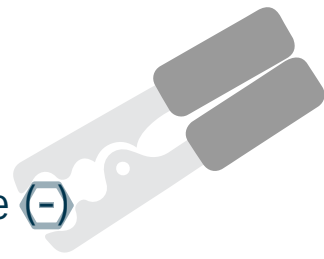
# 03

Attached the **red clip** to your car's positive (+) terminal of the battery, then to the second car's.



# 04

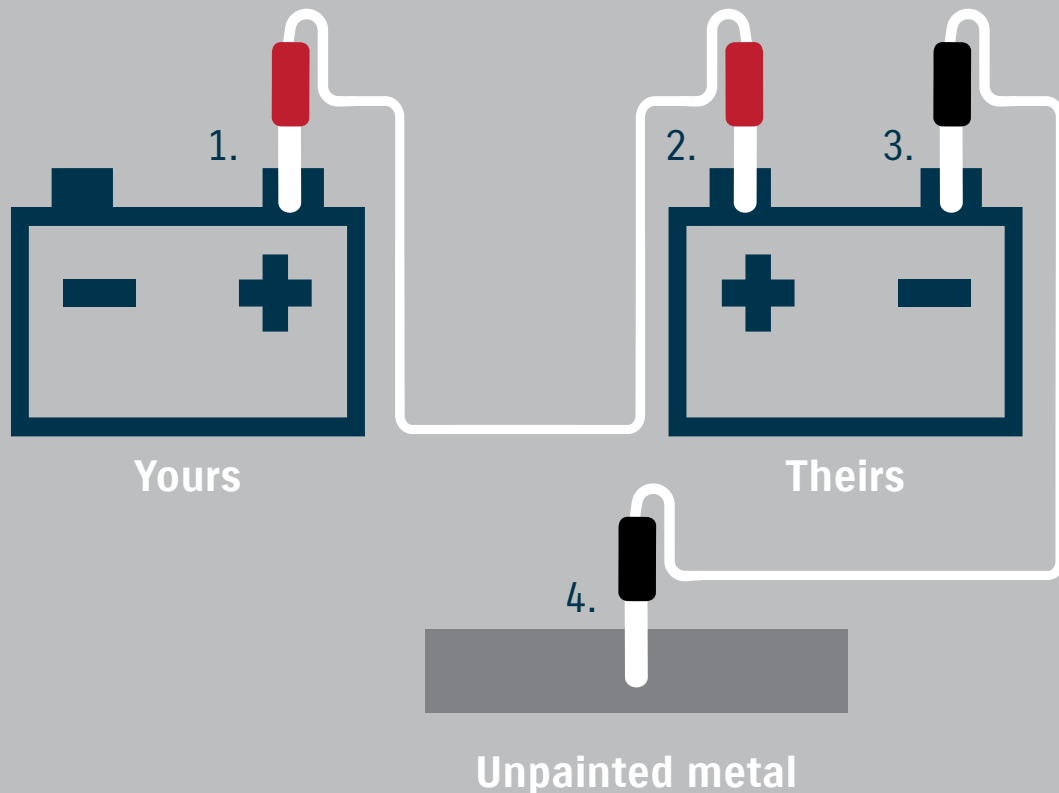
Take a black clip and attach it to the negative (-) terminal of the **second car's** battery.



Take the second black clip and attach it to an unpainted metal surface (**as far from your battery as possible**). We recommend using one of the metal struts that holds the bonnet of your car open.

# 05

## This is how it should look:



# 06

Start the good samaritan's car and let it run (occasionally revving gently) for a five to ten minutes.

5-10  
mins



Start your car.

# 07

# 08

If it still doesn't start, check that the cables are in the correct position and securely connected. Then repeat steps six to seven.

**Do not switch off your ignition once your engine starts.** Close the bonnet and drive it around the block for at least 15 minutes to charge the battery.

# 09

# 10

### USEFUL TIP:

If the battery runs dead a second time, this is an indication that the battery isn't holding its charge. You'll need to visit your nearest dealer or garage to test and replace your battery (if necessary).





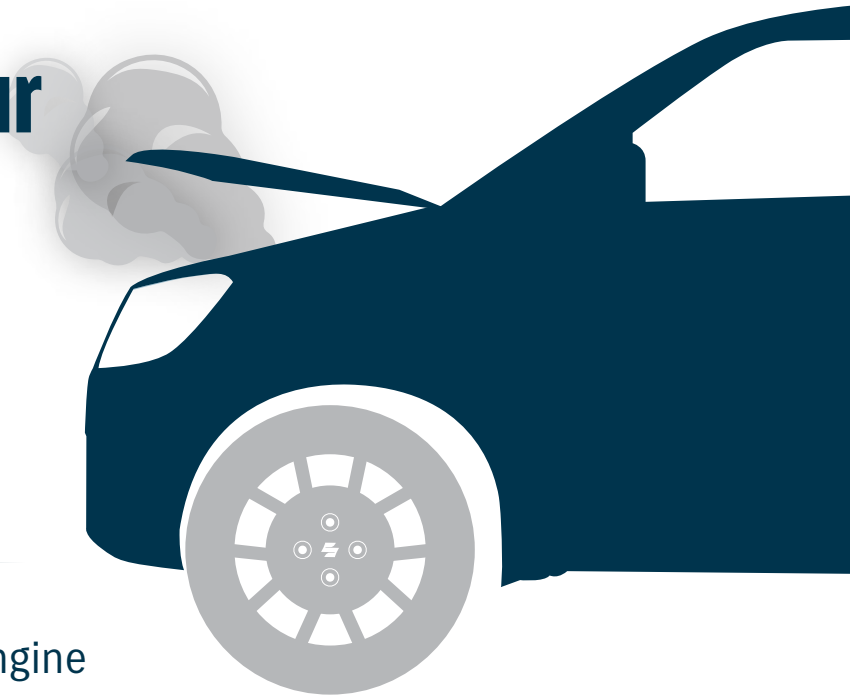
# WHAT TO DO

IF YOUR CAR  
OVERHEATS

During summer, dozens of cars overheat during peak traffic and pull over in the emergency lane. Here's how you can avoid the same mistake.

## How to tell if your car's engine is overheating

(and what to do)



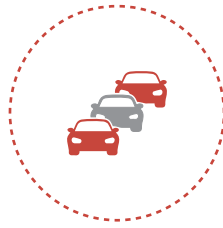
Heat damage can cause your engine to seize, leaving you with a massive repairs bill (& possibly a full engine replacement).

**LEARN** how to spot the signs of overheating, so that you can take steps to prevent a worst case scenario before it happens.

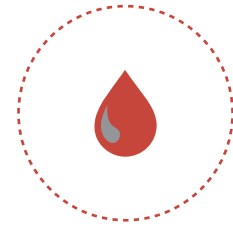
# When is your car at risk of overheating?



On very hot days



In traffic jams or slow moving traffic



When there are leaks or coolant issues



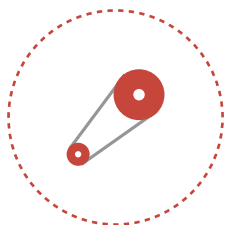
When your coolant hose is blocked



When you have a broken water pump



When the oil light is burning



When it's time to replace your timing belt



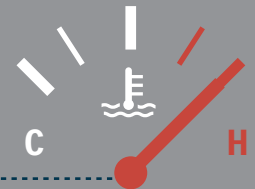
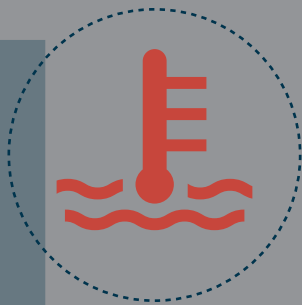
When you're overloaded or towing



When airflow to your engine is blocked

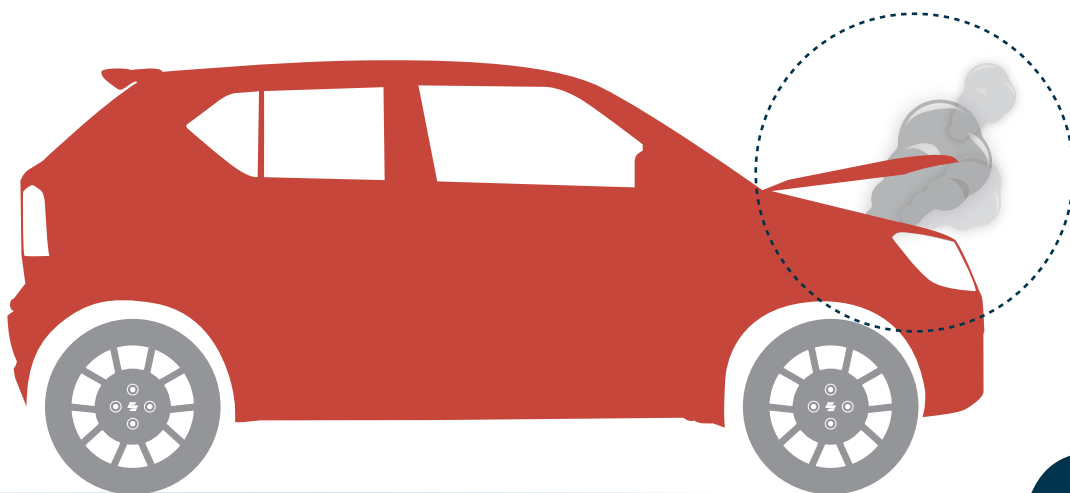
# Signs your car could be overheating:

# 01



## **YOUR TEMPERATURE GAUGE IS SIGNALLING A PROBLEM.**

If your car is pointing to H or displaying the red temperature warning light, your car is in danger of overheating. If the warning light starts flashing, this means the car is definitely overheating.



# 02

## **SMOKE OR STEAM COMING FROM YOUR ENGINE.**

This is a no brainer. Pull over to a safe place to stop immediately!

# 03

## UNUSUAL STEAM COMING FROM YOUR EXHAUST PIPE.

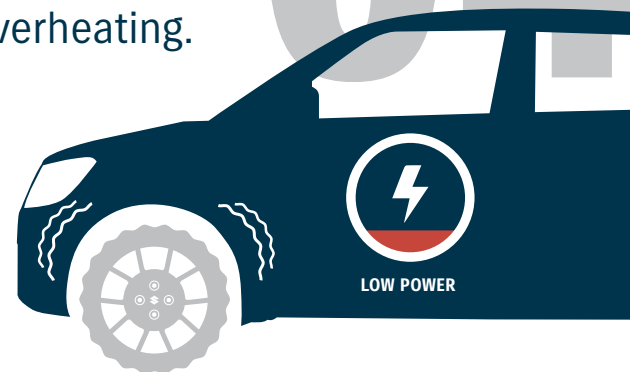
Steam from your exhaust pipe, like steam from your bonnet, is a good indicator that your car's overheating.



## YOUR CAR IS SHUDDERING, OR LACKS ITS USUAL

**POWER.** If you notice any weird shuddering, or your baby doesn't seem to have her usual amount of "vooma", she may be overheating.

# 04



# 05

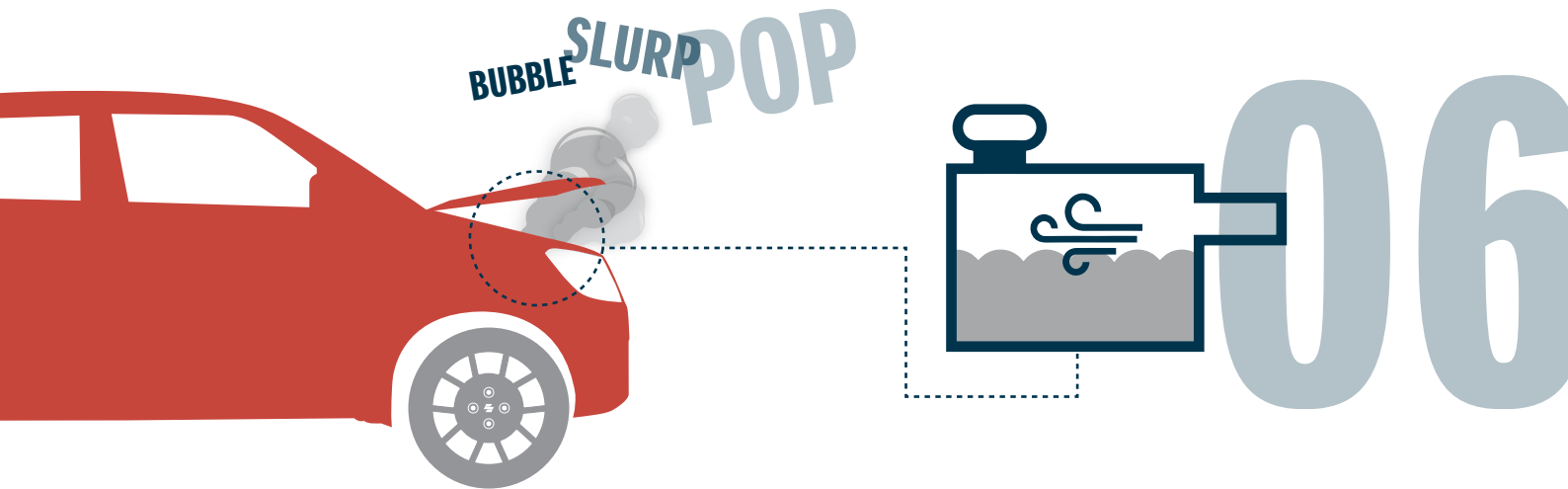


## YOUR HEATER IS BLOWING COLD AIR.

Although this sounds bizarre, if your car's heater begins blowing cold air, your engine is low on coolant. This doesn't mean your car is overheating - but it does mean that it's at risk of overheating in the future.



If you notice any liquid pooling under your car, get it looked at by your dealer or mechanic immediately.



## YOU CAN HEAR A BUBBLING SOUND.

Sometimes, when your car overheats, coolant enters the engine's overflow - causing a bubbling noise to occur. When air is present in the cooling system, your car is at risk of overheating.

# What to do if your car **OVERHEATS**

**IF YOU THINK YOUR CAR IS OVERHEATING, PULL OVER IMMEDIATELY AND ALLOW THE ENGINE TO COOL DOWN.**



If your car's engine has overheated, call your roadside assistance or a tow truck and get the car towed to your dealer or a mechanic. If you continue to drive the car, the engine will seize and you'll have a very expensive repair job on your hands.

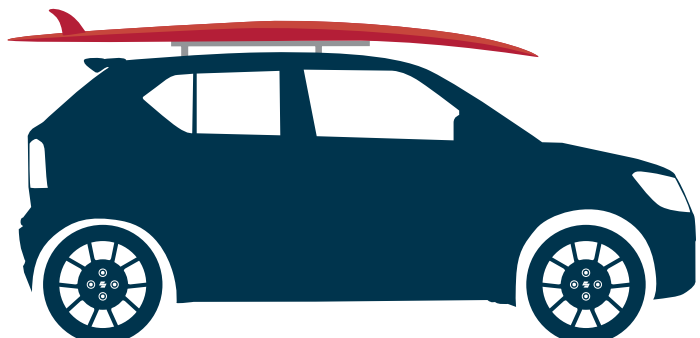




## How to avoid your car overheating

The best way to avoid engine trouble, is to get your car serviced regularly. Servicing your car at least once a year or every 15 000km will keep your engine running smoothly, and alert you to any potential problems before they manifest into breakdowns and expensive repairs.

15000



If you know you're going on a long journey (like a family holiday road trip) get your baby serviced before you hit the road. This will give you peace of mind, knowing everything is in order.



# HOW TO CHANGE A TYRE

Don't panic, it's not as hard as it sounds. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you safely change a flat tyre by yourself.

## What tools will you need for the job?

To safely change a tyre, you'll need the following five items:



spare tyre  
(fully inflated)



jack



socket  
wrench



wheel  
chock



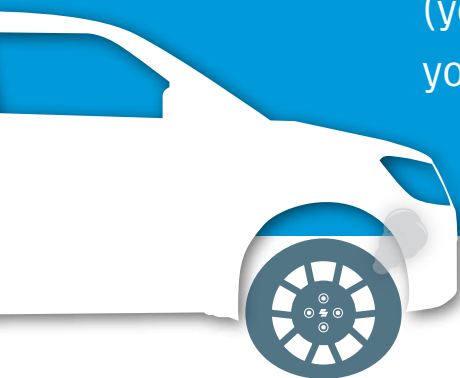
warning  
triangle

**TIP:** It's a good idea to keep all of these items in your boot with you at all times - you never know when you'll need them.

# Changing a tyre (in 14 easy steps)

# 01

Drive the car (very slowly) to a safe place (move the car out of harm's way, out of the way of other cars) to stop and change your tyre. A new wheel is cheaper than an accident or hospital bill, so worry about your (and other motorists') safety first. Try to choose a flat, hard surface. If you're driving off-road and you only have sand or soft ground available, try to find something strong and flat to put your jack on (you could keep a small piece of wood in your boot for emergencies).



Place your warning triangle 45m behind your vehicle, to let other motorists know that they need to approach with caution.

# 02

A blue warning triangle icon with a white exclamation mark inside, positioned to the right of the number '02'.

# 03

Put the car into first gear, reverse or park (if it's an automatic). Make sure the handbrake is securely pulled up, and switch off the engine.



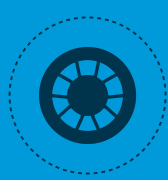






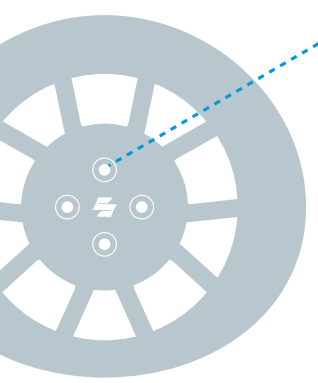
# 04

Place your wheel chock, a stone or a brick behind the opposite tyre. You'll need to place this under the wheel diagonally opposite the wheel you're trying to change

# 05

Prepare your tools. Place your tools next to the wheel you'll be changing (once the jack is in place, you shouldn't be rummaging around in the car looking for things).

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- 
- 
- 
- 

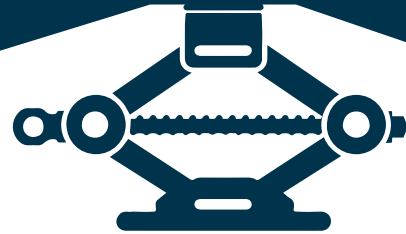


# 06

Loosen the lug nuts. Using your socket wrench, turn each lug nut one full turn to the left, but do not remove them.

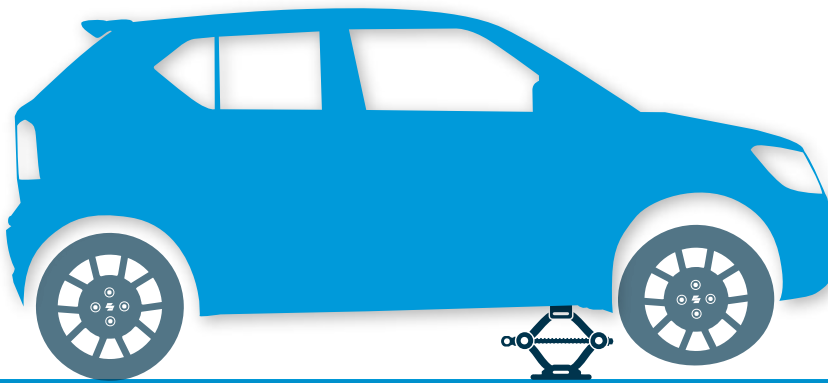
# 07

Place your jack under the vehicle. Check your owner's manual to find out where the appropriate spot is on your particular make and model.



Open the jack until the wheel you're changing is off the ground.

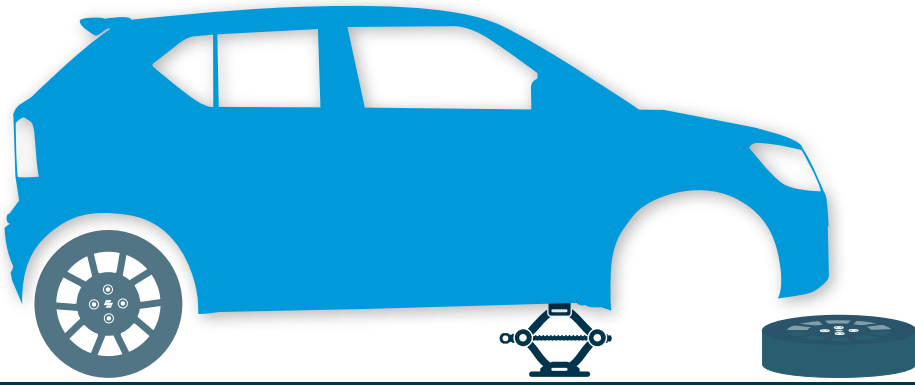
# 08



# 09

Remove your lug nuts, placing them together in a safe place next to you.





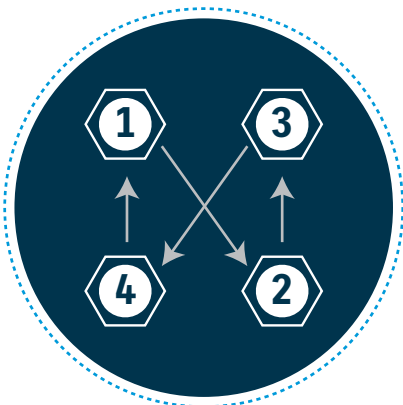
# 10

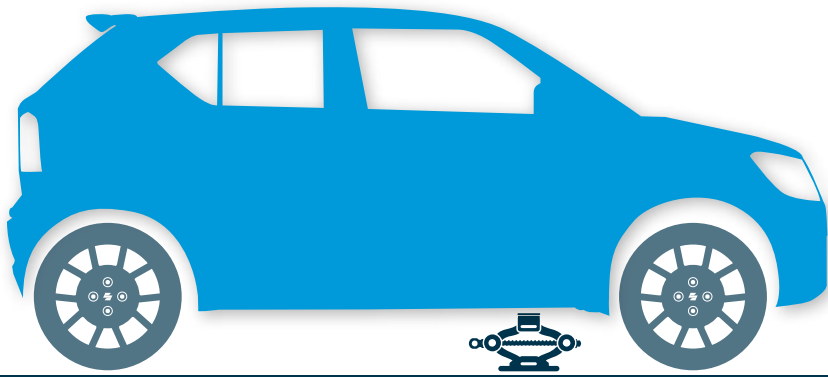
Lift the damaged tyre off the car, and replace it with your spare tyre.

# 11

Place your lug nuts firmly back on to the new tyre and start to tighten them (until they feel snug), but don't tighten fully them just yet.

Remember, you're turning them to the right this time. You need to tighten the lug nuts in the following pattern:





# 12

Make sure you've cleared everything from around the car, and lower the jack until the wheel is firmly back on the ground.

# 13



Tighten the lug nuts the rest of the way, making sure you get them as tight as possible.

# 14

Put all your tools, the damaged tyre and your warning triangle back into your car and slowly re-enter traffic. Make sure you check your mirrors and wait for a safe opportunity to join the road. If your spare tyre is a temporary tyre, you should make your way to your nearest tyre centre for a new wheel.



**REMEMBER** that once you've changed your tyre, you're driving around without a spare, so you'll need to ensure that you replace your spare as quickly as possible.



# HOW TO FIX A PUNCTURE

Picked up a pesky nail in your new tyre? Don't despair, you can follow these simple steps to pull it out and plug the puncture.

## What tools will you need for the job?

To safely fix a puncture, you'll need the following items:



puncture  
repair kit



wheel  
spanner



wheel  
chock



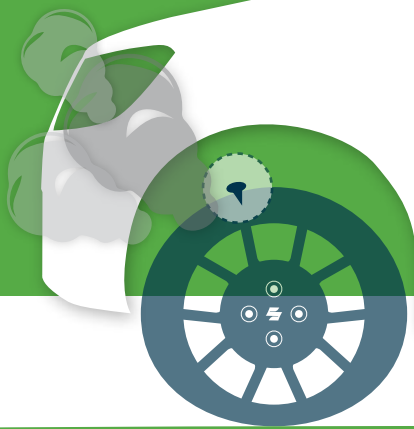
warning  
triangle

**TIP:** It's a good idea to keep all of these items in your boot with you at all times - you never know when you'll need them.

# Fixing a puncture (in 7 easy steps)

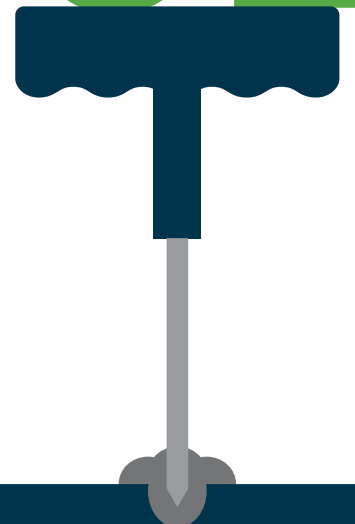
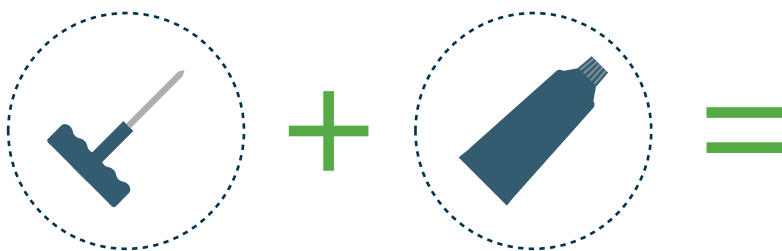
# 01

Identify the source of the puncture (if it's still wedged into your tyre, pull it out).



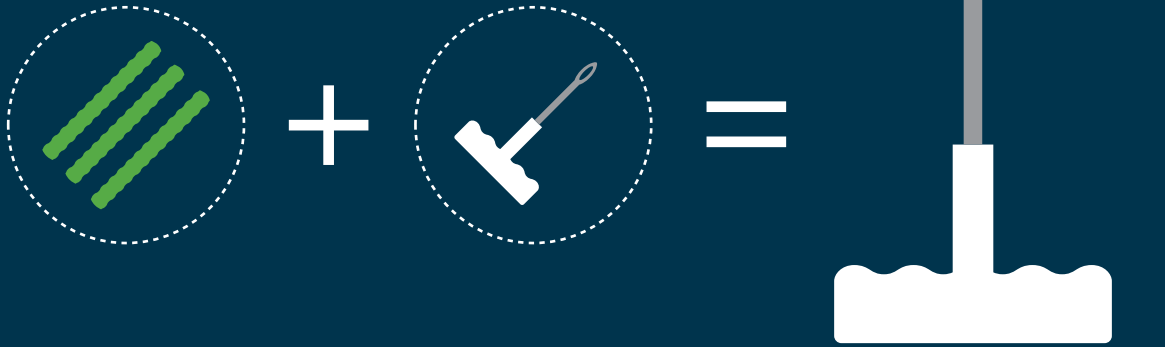
From your puncture repair kit, grab the tube of rubber cement and the reamer. Squeeze the cement onto the hole, and work it in and out of the puncture with the reamer (this will clean and widen the hole).

# 02

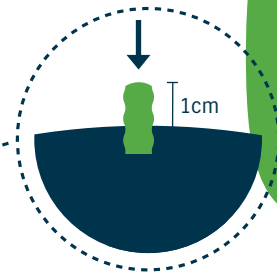


# 03

Next, take out a plug and the plug insertion tool from the repair kit. Pull the plug through the needle-eye of the inserter and squeeze some more rubber cement onto the plug itself.



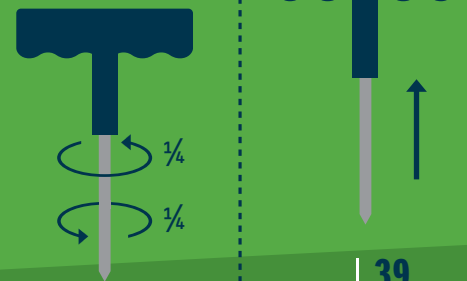
# 04



Push the plug into the puncture, leaving about 1cm sticking out of the tyre.

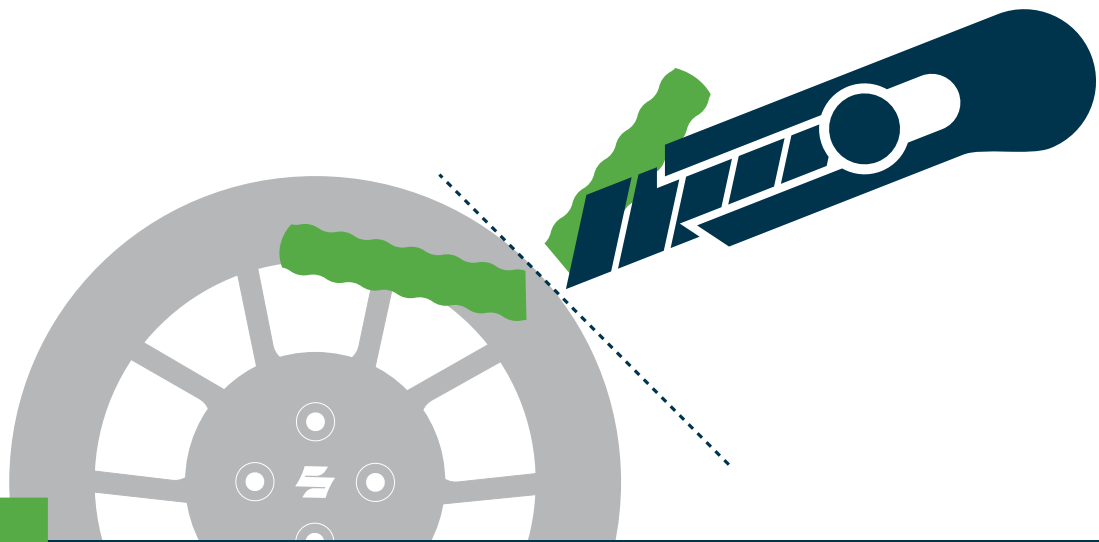
# 05

Turn the inserter approximately a quarter of the way around, and then remove it as quickly as possible.



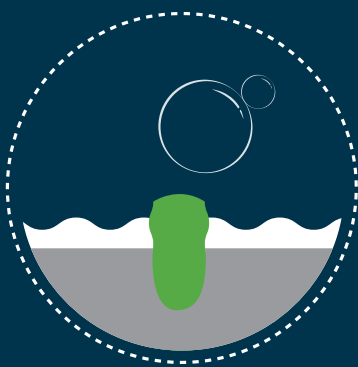
# 06

Using a blade, slice off the excess bits of the plug sticking out (flush with the surface of the tyre).



# 07

Inflate the tyre and, if possible, pour some water over the hole to check for leaks (it will bubble if there's a leak).





# 04 GENERAL DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

**Car trouble isn't the only thing you need to watch out for as a motorist.**

The South African roads are infamous for being some of the most dangerous in the world. Here's some general driving safety tips that will keep you and your loved ones safe and out of harm's way.

01

## DRIVING SAFELY IN THE RAIN

**Slick, slippery roads and poor visibility make driving in the rain both stressful and dangerous. Suzuki expert Charl Grobler shares advice on staying safe during the downpour.**

Wet roads, poor fellow drivers and severely limited visibility all lead to driving stress, possible danger and avoidable accidents when the rain comes down. Charl Grobler, manager of marketing and product planning at Suzuki South Africa, shares his insights and some easy-to-follow advice on driving safely on the slick South African roads.

## 1

## TYRE PRESSURE AND TREAD

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Keep your tyres at optimum levels and, importantly, check your tyre tread. “Worn down tyres are very dangerous on slippery roads,” says Charl, because they have less grip against the slick road.

The **AA** adds, “One of the main dangers in the wet is when the tread on the tyres is no longer able to channel away water, and the tyre lifts off the road surface and starts to skim across the water like a speedboat. This ‘aquaplaning’, as it’s called, can happen at slow speeds with little water on the road if your tyres are badly worn. But with enough water on the road, even new tyres will aquaplane, and at lower speeds than you might expect.”

## 2

## STOPPING DISTANCE

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Driving fast, in a heavy car or on a wet road all increase your stopping distance dramatically. Say **Arrive Alive**, “Increase the three- second rule to 5-6 seconds to maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead of you.” (Read more about the importance of stopping distances in our blog post on 9 safe driving tips.)

## 3

## BE PROACTIVE

---

Try and think ahead to what could happen on the road. Indecisiveness makes you unpredictable and dangerous to your fellow drivers, so don’t act hastily, but don’t be overly cautious. Keep the traffic flowing with decisive driving.

## 4

## BE WARY OF THE FIRST RAIN OF THE SEASON

---

Oil collects on the road, and after the first rain it floats to the surface and makes the road slicker than usual.

6

## DRIVING ON THE SHOULDER

---

“Only move towards the shoulder if you are able to see clearly 150m ahead of you. Keep in mind that pedestrians may be walking on the shoulder to avoid the mud next to the surface of the road,” says Arrive Alive.

6

## CLEAN YOUR WIPER BLADES

---

Visibility is tricky as it is in the deluge, so don't add to it with poorly maintained wiper blades. Replace them regularly, and give them a wipe occasionally too.

7

## DRIVING AROUND BENDS

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Says Arrive Alive, “Always change to a lower gear before you take a bend, especially a sharp bend. Your speed should be at its slowest as you enter the bend and both your hands should be on the steering wheel. This slow in / fast out technique gives you most control when driving around a bend.”

8

## DON'T TURN ON YOUR HAZARDS

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“They're intended for stationary cars,” says Charl, “and though they increase visibility, they are also distracting and confusing.”

9

## DEMIST YOUR WINDOWS

---

Instead of keeping the air con on, and you and your guests cold, turn on the heater, switch the setting to the windscreen and warm up the glass to keep it fog free. AA says, “It's nearly impossible to stay safe without visibility - how often haven't you seen drivers helplessly trying to clear a patch on a fogged windscreen,

or feeling their way through heavy rain with failed windscreen wipers. If your heater, demister or wipers are deficient in any way, get them seen to now, before it's too late." If you have a climate controlled car, it will do all of this itself.

**10**

### **WATCH OUT FOR PUDDLES**

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"Be careful of puddles, they could be hiding potholes," warns Charl.

**11**

### **DON'T DRIVE THROUGH DEEP WATER**

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Anything above ankle height, especially if it's fast moving, is dangerous and could stall or stop your car. Water can get sucked up the exhaust and damage the electrics, so be wary of water that look too high. (Read our post on flash floods for more information on staying safe in deep water.)

**12**

### **DON'T BRAKE SUDDENLY**

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Says **Arrive Alive**, "Never use the brakes suddenly because this may cause the car to skid."

**13**

### **KEEP YOUR HEADLIGHTS ON**

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Do anything to increase how visible you are on the road, including turning on your headlights - not your fog lights.

**14**

### **BE EXTRA CAREFUL OF YOUR BLIND SPOT**

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Rain-splattered windows impair visibility even more, so be extra aware of cars in your blind spots.

## 02

## DRIVING SAFELY THROUGH ROAD WORKS AND CONSTRUCTION ZONES

Road workers and flaggers strive to improve South African road conditions. It's our job as motorists to be alert, aware and responsive to keep our workers safe while they're hard at work.

It's been 45 minutes, and you're late for a meeting - time to skip the line and get moving. Road works are such a pain...

**This mentality ends in thousands of deaths each year.**

What we as motorists often take for granted, is that construction workers and flaggers are hard at work to provide us with safe, well maintained roads and better infrastructure. Construction zones and road works are notoriously dangerous for both workers and motorists alike. According to **Arrive Alive**, thousands of people die each year as a result of accidents which happen passing through road maintenance or construction zones.

There's been a significant increase in road works around the country, as the South African government pushes to improve our infrastructure. This means that motorists need to be especially careful, to avoid the number of injuries and fatalities creeping even higher.

**Arrive Alive identified the following main causes of injuries and deaths at construction zones:**



### **IMPATIENT DRIVERS**

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Impatient drivers who are either speeding or trying to force their way into converging lanes at the very last minute. This is **the number one cause** of injuries (or death) to road workers.



### **DRIVERS THAT ARE DISTRACTED**

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Drivers that are distracted by texting, cell phone calls or passengers, who don't see that lanes are converging or don't merge safely.



### **DRIVERS WHO DON'T OBEY THE SIGNS OR FLAGGERS**

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Drivers who don't obey the signs or flaggers indicating that they need to slow down or stop.



### **BAD LIGHTING OR VISIBILITY**

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Bad lighting or visibility causing drivers to miss signs warning of road works ahead.

As a rule of thumb, motorists should always expect the unexpected. Driving through roadworks, you could encounter a range of unexpected conditions from new traffic patterns to narrow lanes, workers in the road, lane closures, detours, slow moving equipment and concrete barriers.

It's important to stay alert and limit distractions while passing through road works, we know it's hard - but WhatsApp can wait! **Arrive Alive** suggest that motorists take some additional precautions to drive safely through a construction zone:

### **LEAVE EARLY.**

If you know that you'll encounter a construction zone enroute, either plan to take a different road or, if the road works can't be avoided, leave home with enough time to cater for delays.

### **SLOW DOWN!**

Exercise caution when approaching roadworks or a construction zone.

### **PAY ATTENTION TO THE YELLOW CAUTION SIGNS.**

They're there for your safety, so take heed of any warning signs you see when entering a construction zone. Arrive Alive writes, "observe these posted signs until you see the one that says you've left the work zone."

### **TURN ON YOUR LIGHTS.**

If you're driving in poor light conditions (or if there's mist or rain) you need to make your car is as visible as possible.

### **AVOID ABRUPT DRIVING MANOEUVRES.**

Keep your pace slow and steady, and try to avoid having to slam on brakes.

## **MAINTAIN A SAFE FOLLOWING DISTANCE.**

Rear-end fender benders are one of the most common accidents around road works. Arrive Alive warns, “always be aware that vehicles ahead of you may stop unexpectedly.”

## **FOLLOW THE TEMPORARY ROAD SIGN INSTRUCTIONS.**

They’re not there to look pretty! “Drivers should slow to the posted speed and move to the proper lane as instructed” writes Arrive Alive, “traffic and road conditions may dictate an even slower speed.”

## **KEEP UP WITH THE TRAFFIC FLOW.**

Gawking and “rubbernecking” causes delays and accidents. Arrive Alive advises, “motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by merging smoothly.”

## **OBEY ROAD CREW FLAGGERS!**

The flagger knows what is best for moving traffic safely in the work zone,” Arrive Alive warns. “A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so you can be cited for disobeying his or her direction.”

## **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO JOIN THE CORRECT LANE.**

Indicate with enough time to safely enter the correct lane. Arrive Alive writes, “narrow lanes and restricted shoulders make construction zones a common place for lane-change accidents.” Temporary lanes and shoulders aren’t as stable as regular traffic lanes, and often cause confusion and congestion.



### **STAY ALERT FOR AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS.**

It's much easier to give way to an aggressive motorist than to try and hold your place in the queue, only to cause an accident. "If another motorist is aggressively jockeying for position, drivers should let them move on," warns Arrive Alive. "Challenging another driver encourages road rage and endangers the safety of other motorists and workers in the area."

### **WATCH OUT FOR CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AND WORKERS.**

Workers and equipment are inevitable, unpredictable obstacles at a construction site. Be alert, and keep your eyes and ears peeled for construction vehicles, equipment or workers who need to pass by.

### **WATCH OUT FOR DEBRIS.**

Construction equipment like cones, barriers or signs could be very close to (or even in) the roadway. Arrive Alive writes, "debris from work projects, especially dust, dirt, and gravel, may cause added disruption."

### **BE PATIENT, CAUTIOUS, AND COURTEOUS.**

Despite the delays, you need to remain calm and treat workers and other motorists respectfully. You're all in the same boat. "Remember, the work zone crew members are working to improve the road and make your future drive better," writes Arrive Alive.

## 03

## DRIVING SAFELY AT NIGHT TIME

**Many of us are so used to driving it's become like brushing your teeth or putting on socks.**

This isn't necessarily a bad thing – being comfortable behind the wheel makes you a safer driver – but on the other hand, being too relaxed about the situation can, unfortunately, have disastrous results. And we all know that at night you simply need to be extra careful and pay more attention, so here are a few reminders for the night owls:



### GET BACK TO BASICS

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Make sure your windscreen is clean. This sounds like such a simple tip, but most of us don't bother if there are a few splattered bugs on the windscreen. At night, however, these can become a serious distraction. They keep catching your eye, and with changing light reflections, marks on your windscreen can look they're moving, causing you to get a fright or even swerve. We wish there were actual statistics, but from real-life experience we know of more than one accident that was caused this way.

So just give your windscreen a wipe and avoid having to explain a 'bug-splat' swerving claim to your insurance company. When you're doing a long trip, make sure your washer fluid is topped up.



### STAY AWAY FROM THE LIGHT!

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Many drivers struggle with glare or reflections caused by the headlights of oncoming vehicles. If you're driving through unlit areas, such as the long trek through the Karoo, you need to pay

careful attention to not get temporarily blinded by oncoming cars. Try to keep your eyes on 'your' side of the road, so you're not staring directly into the oncoming lights, but still aware of where the oncoming vehicle is. Again, this might sound silly, but when you're doing a long, dark drive, it's easy to almost become 'hypnotised' by oncoming lights. As long as you're aware of it, you'll be able to avoid it.



## CHECK YOUR OWN LIGHTS

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Most new vehicles have intelligent headlights that adjust automatically to the curve of the road and oncoming vehicles, but if you're a regular night driver, you should have your lights checked more often. If your own lights are unwittingly set too high, you could blind oncoming drivers and cause a serious accident.

Many drivers in rural, farming, or wildlife areas will often set their lights to illuminate as much as possible next to the road. The risk of animals standing or running into the road is high, so you want to be able to spot them as soon as possible. A handy tip to remember: you'll often be able to see the light reflecting off the eyes of nearby animals, so if you see two (or more) tiny pinpricks of light, slow down.



## STAY AWAKE AND AWARE

---

One of the biggest dangers when driving at night is falling asleep behind the wheel - or encountering another driver who has done so. Everyone has their own tricks (open windows, singing, upbeat music, extra coffee) - so plan ahead when you know you'll be driving at night to keep yourself alert. It's not just about staying awake - it's about remaining as alert and aware as possible.

So being just a 'little tired' is not an option – visibility is limited at night, which means hazards are often only seen at the last moment. You need to be very alert in order to react fast enough.



## AVOID DISTRACTIONS

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This counts at all times, but it's especially important at night due to reduced visibility. The most obvious is your cell phone. If you need to be connected, make sure you have a safe hands-free option, and try not to make or answer calls unless you really need to.

It's often a tricky balance between staying alert and avoiding distractions. Loud music and eating while driving are considered distractions, but some people find these tend to keep them awake and focused. There's no magic recipe, and you need to find what works best for you, but just keep it logical: the music shouldn't be so loud that you miss the police sirens behind you, and the snacks shouldn't be too complicated. A bowl of soup, for example, is probably not a good idea.

**At the end of the day (bad pun intended), driving at night should be taken seriously, no matter how often you do it.**

Make sure you're prepared and keep a mental checklist going to keep yourself on track.

## 04

## ANTI-HIJACK ADVICE

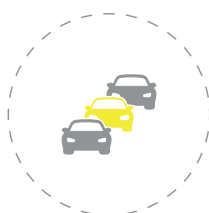
**Every motorist should do an anti-hijack driving course –** it can be a life-saving decision. Here's a quick overview of what this entails.



### IT STARTS AT HOME

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A large number of hijackings take place near residences, and the reason is simple: hijackers know this is where you feel safe and will let your guard down. Ensure your driveway is well lit and if you have security cameras, make sure they're visible and possibly even marked to make it very clear that the area is under surveillance. At the end of the day, hijackers want to get away, so they will avoid areas that pose a greater risk of getting caught.



### KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

---

Avoid putting yourself in a situation where you'll be stuck in the event of an attack. If you have to wait for a gate or garage door to open, don't drive right up to it and then wait for it to open. Rather remain in the street or angled in such a way that you can quickly drive off if need be.

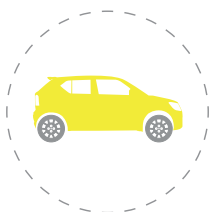
Similarly, leave enough space between your car and the one in front when you're stopped at traffic lights, or in slow-moving traffic. You need to be able to move around the vehicle in front of you and get away if there's an attempted hijacking.



## FORGET ABOUT THE COST

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Many hijackings happen on busy roads in heavy traffic. Many drivers will hesitate before ramping a pavement, hitting another vehicle or damaging their own vehicle in order to evade a hijacking. It's instinct: damaging your car goes against all normal rules of logic. Hijackers know this and will take advantage of your hesitation. At the back of your mind, you should always be prepared to do whatever it takes to get away. A car can be replaced, not your life.



## THEY WANT THE CAR, NOT YOU

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If you do get hijacked, the most important thing to remember is that they want the car, not you. Communicate with them about what you're doing (no unexpected movements). Follow their instructions (they might ask you to leave the car running), or place the keys and any valuables on the ground and back away. Make it very clear that you are cooperating and that they can take the car. Put as much distance between yourself and the vehicle as possible - the car is their main objective, so the further you get away from it, the better.



## KIDS FIRST

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If you have children in the car, the rule is simple: you don't leave the car without them. As mentioned in the point above: hijackers want the car, not the people. The **experts** will give you detailed training that covers many scenarios, but parents are advised to clearly inform the hijackers that you are first removing your child or children.

You then turn around inside the vehicle, unbuckle your kids or remove them from their child seats, and have them exit the car with you. Every situation is risky and different, but calm and clear communication is vital. You need to make it very clear that you will not resist, but be firm that you are first removing your children.



## DON'T DAWDLE

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Many of us get in our cars at shopping centres, in parking lots, or even in our driveways and then do a million things before driving off. Some will check email, touch up make-up, return calls, or even have a quick snack before driving off. Sitting in your car whilst completely focused on other tasks makes you the ideal target for hijackers.

It may be a difficult routine to change, but get into the habit of saving all these tasks for later, or do them before you head to your car. Once you're in your car, you should be ready to drive off with no distractions. This offers hijackers much less opportunity to catch you off guard.



## DON'T TEMPT FATE

---

This bit of advice applies to smash and grabs, as well as hijackings: don't leave temptations lying around in your car. Whether it's a full shopping bag, backpack, or cellphone – any small temptation can make a hijacker decide to target you next. Place all bags and valuables in the boot where they can't be seen.



## STAY ALERT

---

Always be aware of your surroundings, no matter how safe you feel in a specific area. Watch people when you're waiting at a traffic light – quite often this is a deterrent in itself – hijackers want to catch you off-guard and if they see you looking at them and surveying your surroundings, they could decide you're not worth the risk.

Also be aware of vehicles around you. If traffic is light, but the same vehicle (or more than one) are obviously sticking close to you, they may be looking for an opportunity to force you off the road or catch you at the next stop. This can be tricky to spot, but trust your instincts: if the situation feels wrong, drive to the nearest 'busy' place (police stations are always the first choice). If need be, just slow down at traffic lights to make sure you can cross safely, but don't come to a complete standstill if you suspect you're being followed.

The above tips are a **broad overview** of steps drivers can take to reduce their risk of being hijacked, or to mitigate the risk in the event of a hijacking.



## ANTI-HIJACK DRIVING COURSE

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We can't overemphasise how important it is to do an anti-hijack driving course – they're a crucial part of keeping yourself and your loved ones safe on the road.



## 05

## CAR SEAT SAFETY: KEEPING YOUR LITTLE ONES SAFE AND SOUND

Driving with your little one on a lap, or not strapped in, is not only **extremely dangerous** (as they can fly through a window or windscreen if you slam on brakes), but it's also illegal in South Africa.



### SOUTH AFRICA'S CAR SEAT SAFETY LAWS:

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According to **Women on Wheels**, motorists are held responsible (by law) for any children aged 14 and under that isn't buckled in with a seat belt.

A recent visual survey by the Automobile Association revealed that 93% of children are not strapped into safety or booster seats. Women on Wheels write, "It's illegal to travel in a car with a child under three years old that is not strapped into an approved safety seat. The driver is legally responsible for any child under the age of 14 not using a seatbelt in their car. Every person in a car – the driver and all passengers, in both the front and rear, of any age or size – has to be strapped in with a seatbelt or appropriate child restraint."

# 05 CONCLUSION

**There's nothing more precious in life than life itself,** and because of that and our fervent belief in enjoying the Way of Life, Suzuki strives to make the South African roads safer for motorists and pedestrians alike.

We hope that you've learnt a lot from this guide, and wish you and your loved ones many safe, happy kilometers in your car.

# MEET THE AUTHOR



## CHARL GROBLER

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Marketing and Product Planning Manager. Self-described petrol head, Charl grew up around vehicles of all kinds. His father was a car salesman and Charl has vivid memories of running around the dealer showroom as a young boy, admiring the shiny new cars. He's been in the automotive industry for 14 years, worked as a salesman for four, and joined Suzuki in 2008.

Charl thinks that **“cars liberate people”** and believes it's completely normal to have an emotional relationship with a car... even one that isn't yours.