

# COLLISION REPAIR CENTER

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SAFETY CHECKS SAVE LIVES!

By  
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Here in the Rocky Mountain Region winter will arrive with a vengeance in the High Country. So far, the Denver Metro area has been very dry and has escaped the brunt of Mother Nature...but as we all know it's coming!

A thorough quality repair is not only expected...it is mandatory for all Collision Repair Centers and is the core performance benchmark for repeat business of vehicle owners and Insurers alike.

Along with quality repair work we must deliver quality service, integrity, honesty, and safety. It is safety, the key attribute of a Collision Repair Center, which is of utmost importance. We want the repair and delivery of each vehicle to be professionally completed and returned to the customer in a safe, operable condition. "Safety saves Lives."

Here are the FACTS:

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motorists are 36% more likely to be involved in a car accident in January than July. In fact, statistics revealed that bad weather conditions are responsible for around 24% of all road crashes.

Icy or wet roads increase the stopping distance between cars. Many drivers don't take this into account when following other automobiles. Including reaction time, a car traveling at 45 mph on a dry road takes about 125 feet to reach a complete stop. That same car on any icy road, going the same speed, takes about 480 feet to stop. That's almost a 4-fold increase in the stopping distance. Here in Colorado, sand in an intersection can have the same result.

Winter storms are considered deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. About 70% of the deaths related to winter storms occur in automobiles.

So, what can we as repairers do to protect our customers? ... Let me re-phrase this question...What *must* we do? Here is a good start:

1. Review our current "Safety Check List" below and be sure it is complete and up to date. Vehicles have changed and added more features that were previously not available. Items such as: vehicle back-up cameras, navigation systems, brake and tire pressure sensors, extra fuse and bulb boxes, and other new additions are being added each year.

These are the items that we recommend as part of your "Safety Check List":

- a. Inspect the wipers and wiper fluid
- b. Test anti-freeze/coolant to make sure you have the correct level of protection required for weather temperature conditions
- c. Make sure tires are properly inflated. Letting air out of tires to drive in snow can

- reduce the gripping action of tires because the tread will not meet the road surface as it was designed to. Over inflation has the same effect.
- d. Check that the heater and the windshield defroster are working.
  - e. Check that lights, brake lights and blinkers are working properly. We may need to suggest a headlamp refurbishment(\*link to headlight restoration page) to help with seeing at night; especially to spot children and animals in the dark.
  - f. Make sure your battery is in good working condition, clean and fully charged. Remember to check the cable

2. Do not just check off your list and short cut this important task; be sure to physically look at each area of the vehicle. It is also important to document your findings and recommendations. Whether it is tire wear, brake pad wear, heater issues or others we must be sure to document it. Prior to delivering the car back to your customer, give them a call and review what we have discovered that may need to be addressed and offer to fix the problem(s) or arrange for the repairs to be completed by a reputable service center.

3. Communicate our findings again to your Customers verbally at the time of delivery. Even if everything has checked out OK, it is reassuring to our customers to know that you have gone the extra mile for them.

Along with the "Safety Check List" above, I like to give a couple of additional winter tips to help ensure our customers have a safe season.

- a. Keep your gas tank at least half-full. The extra volume can help reduce moisture problems within the fuel system. It also adds a margin of safety should they become stopped or stranded during a trip.
- b. Carry a winter survival kit in your car. (If they don't have a kit, it is not a bad idea to provide one or two items to them. Here is a quick list for the kit:
  - first-aid kit
  - drinking water
  - non-perishable food
  - blankets and warm clothes (hats, gloves, boots)
  - shovel and scraper
  - flashlight and batteries
  - candles or sterno flame
  - lighter or matches
  - booster cable
  - chain/tow strap

If we follow these safety checks we will help ensure that our customer's vehicle is safe during the winter months, and we will contribute to saving lives. Let's ALL work to protect our customers as best we can.

GREG WAKEFIELD IS THE OWNER OF TIGHT CURVES COLLISION CENTER IN LITTLETON, COLORADO.