CarFit Reporting Gets an Upgrade

In January, Paulette Welch a CarFit Instructor had a brilliant idea to improve CarFit for all Event Coordinators. She recognized that often following an event, some new coordinators were not sure what to do with their checklists. Her proposal was to include in all checklist orders a prepaid return envelope so that the reporting could be completed simply and easily.

The CarFit partners listened to Paulette’s idea and did a little research. In 2011, 3,800+ drivers completed a CarFit checklist. During this same time, the CarFit program mailed out more than 12,000 checklists to Event Coordinators in 42 states.

Beginning in late-May, all orders of the CarFit checklist will include enhanced and simplified reporting instructions, an activity summary report, and a prepaid return envelope for the checklists.

And, the great thing is CarFit Event Coordinators won’t have to change a thing! Simply order your checklists the exact same way by calling 1-800-569-1658 and asking for the CarFit Checklists stock #D18819.

This will be an increased expense for CarFit, but one that we believe will go a long way to support our program and completely and accurately capture all of the hard work done by all!

A big thank you goes out to Paulette for her simple but effective idea and for
Visit the CarFit website to update your current contact information: www.car-fit.org

Document Your Events!

To maintain accurate data, Event coordinators need to send completed checklists and participant data forms to:

CarFit
AARP Driver Safety Program
601 E. St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20049

Don’t forget to retain waiver forms on site for a time period determined by your organization’s legal department.

Have you submitted all your forms that took place in 2010?

For more information:
Check out the expert FAQ on www.car-fit.org.

Tell us your ideas for future newsletters!
Submit ideas to: info@car-fit.org

Are You a SMART Driver?

If you are like many middle-aged or older drivers, it has probably been a few years since you first learned to drive and tested for your license. And yet cars, traffic rules and the very roads we drive on are constantly changing. Be a SMART driver, and use these five tips from AARP Driver Safety to stay safe on today’s increasingly challenging roadways.

Seat Belts Save Lives

Each year, seat belts save thousands of lives. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA), properly worn seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger occupants by 45 percent. Fortunately, seat belt use has been increasing steadily in the U.S., and approximately 85 percent of drivers wear their seat belts. Wear your seat belt at all times, even
Medications and Driving

Many prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can cause impairments such as drowsiness, dizziness and blurred vision, which can be dangerous for your driving. Even among drugs generally considered safe for driving, adverse reactions may still occur, especially when combined with other medications or alcohol. To help avoid drug-impaired driving, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medications, and keep track of how your body feels or reacts to the drugs and supplements you’re taking.

Adverse Weather Tip

It is important to always be mindful while driving, but especially in limited visibility conditions like rain, snow and fog. Turn on your lights (not your high beams), and make sure there is plenty of distance between you and the car ahead of you. Try to keep a “space cushion” around your vehicle. A space cushion is when there are no cars directly to the sides of you, and you have a proper distance between the cars ahead of you and behind you. This provides maneuvering room in case of an emergency situation.

Right of Way

According to NHTSA, 35 percent of traffic violations for drivers age 55+ are for a failure to yield the proper right-of-way. One in four traffic violations involve making an improper left turn; 15 percent involve an improper lane change, and 10 percent are the result of ignoring a stop sign or traffic light. Be extra cautious at intersections, while merging, and around pedestrian walkways. Consider taking a driver’s education course, such as AARP Driver Safety’s classroom or online course, to refresh your knowledge of the rules in tricky driving situations.

Three-second Following Distance

A three-second following distance will help you spot possible driving hazards and give you time to react. For instance, if your car is traveling at a speed of 60 mph, in three seconds your vehicle will have traveled more than 250 feet—that’s just under the length of a football field. To achieve the three-second spacing between you and the car ahead of you, when that car passes a landmark, such as a tree or an exit sign, start counting. If you pass the same spot before you count to three, you’re driving too close to the other car.

Pedestrian Safety: Walk This Way!

Safe walking is sometimes just as important as safe
driving. If you’re on the pedestrian-side of the road, adhere to these five safety tips:

1. Use the sidewalk. If the street is not designed for pedestrians, avoid walking on it. Do not walk on highways or in restricted zones.

2. Obey “walk” and “do not walk” signs. In most states, jaywalking is an illegal offense for which you can receive a ticket.

3. Do not make assumptions. Don’t assume that a vehicle will stop for you just because you are waiting to cross. Try to make eye contact with the driver before initiating crossing. Do not cross multiple lanes of traffic without making sure drivers in all lanes see you. If you’re in a busy city, do not cross without looking both ways—even when you have the pedestrian “walk” symbol—as drivers do occasionally run red lights.

4. Do not walk long distances under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Just as you should never drive under the influence, do not walk long distances or in traffic-heavy areas when you are under the influence. Call a taxi or use public transportation.

5. Be courteous. When a driver stops to allow you to cross, give him or her a quick wave to demonstrate your appreciation.

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**Tornado Safety**

Tornadoes are nature’s most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard. Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible. Below are some tips for what to do if you are caught in a storm.

**In a house with a basement:** Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under some kind of sturdy protection (heavy table or work bench), or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor. Head protection, such as a helmet, can offer some protection also.

**In a house with no basement, or an apartment:** Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell, or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing
down; and cover your head with your hands. A bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection.

**In an office building, hospital, nursing home or skyscraper:** Go directly to an enclosed, windowless area in the center of the building -- away from glass and on the lowest floor possible. Then, crouch down and cover your head. Interior stairwells are usually good places to take shelter, and if not crowded, allow you to get to a lower level quickly. Stay off the elevators; you could be trapped in them if the power is lost.

**In a mobile home:** Get out! Even if your home is tied down, it is not as safe as an underground shelter or permanent, sturdy building. Go to one of those shelters, or to a nearby permanent structure, using your tornado evacuation plan. Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes; and it is best not to play the low odds that yours will make it.

**In a car or truck:** Vehicles are extremely risky in a tornado. There is no safe option when caught in a tornado in a car, just slightly less-dangerous ones. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Seek shelter in a sturdy building, or underground if possible. If you are caught by extreme winds or flying debris, park the car as quickly and safely as possible -- out of the traffic lanes. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges, which can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

**In a shopping mall or large store:** Do not panic. Watch for others. Move as quickly as possible to an interior bathroom, storage room or other small enclosed area, away from windows.

More safety tips can be found at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).