

Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

Blowout!

Bang! It sounded like a gun going off, but it was Jack's left front tire blowing out—the one he'd been putting off replacing until he paid off his new stereo system. The car lurched, jerking the wheel out of Jack's hands. He hit the brakes and tried to regain control, but the car didn't respond. Instead, it lurched sideways into the left lane, where it was sideswiped by another car.

Jack escaped with minor injuries, but the other driver is suing him. He had to take out a loan to pay his deductible and to buy new tires. And he's worried that his insurance will be canceled.



1. What's the best way to respond to a blowout? _____

2. What's the first thing Jack could have done to prevent this collision? _____

3. Many good drivers forget that preventive maintenance is an important aspect of safe driving. What maintenance chores do you consider crucial for safety? _____

Answers:

1. Keep a firm grip on the wheel. If you are holding the steering wheel at 9:00 and 3:00, then you should have the strength and stability needed to control the car. Carefully steer in the direction you want the car to go. Don't step on the brakes until the vehicle slows down enough to begin to respond to your steering. Slowly brake to a stop on a level surface well off the road. Warn other drivers by using your flashing lights as soon as you are free to turn them on.
2. He could have replaced his worn tires. To prevent future blowouts, he should keep his tires properly inflated and check them regularly for abnormal wear.
3. Follow the maintenance schedule recommended in your owner's manual. Service brakes regularly. Get brake and steering problems checked immediately. Before each trip, inspect tires and lights, and check under the car for fluid leaks.

