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# *The Belleville Beat*

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From the Desk of Lt. Don Sax

This month, December 2005, *The Belleville Beat*, provides driving tips when your equipment fails. These tips are a companion piece to last month's issue, Driver Distractions. More safe driving tips are available at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).

## Equipment Failure

Crashes often happen when equipment fails. Your most important aid is remaining calm. Equipment failures may include:

**BLOWOUTS:** A thumping sound may be a warning of a blowout. If this happens, ease your foot off the gas pedal and keep a firm grasp on the steering wheel. Do not brake suddenly. Pull safely off the roadway and check your tires.

**LOSS OF A WHEEL:** React as you would with a blowout. Ease off the gas pedal and pull off the roadway.

**STEERING FAILURE:** If you suddenly have no control of the steering wheel, ease your foot off the gas pedal. Turn on your emergency flashers and allow your vehicle to come to a slow stop. Brake very gently to prevent your vehicle from spinning.

**BRAKE FAILURE:** If your brake pedal suddenly sinks to the floor, pump it to build pressure. If that does not work, use your emergency or parking brake. To slow down, shift your vehicle into a lower gear.

**HEADLIGHT FAILURE:** If your headlights fail suddenly, try your emergency flashers, parking lights and/or turn signals. Pull off the road. If your lights begin to dim, drive to a service station or pull off the road and seek help.

**STUCK GAS PEDAL:** If the gas pedal becomes stuck, hook your toe under it to free it. If it does not become free, shift your vehicle into neutral and brake gently to slow down. If you have power steering or a locking steering wheel, do not turn off the ignition, you will lose either your power steering or your ability to steer.

**BLOCKED VISION:** If for any reason your vision becomes blocked, roll down the side window to see. Turn on your emergency flashers and then pull your vehicle off the road.