

Wheels: Brian of Cincinnati writes, “I occasionally see people at the side of the road inspecting the engine of their vehicle when they’ve had a break down. Given the complexity of today’s vehicles, are they likely to spot the cause? What are some things the average motorist could identify as the culprit and repair the problem, given the limited tools that are likely to be available?”

Halderman: Good question. You are correct when you said that what the average vehicle owner can do is very limited. The best advice I can give vehicle owners is to carry a cell phone and have the number of people, shops, or dealers that can help.

Check the gas tank level and then look for leaking hoses or smoke. Based on your initial inspection, at least you would know more when help is called.

