

If planning a road trip this summer, it's important to remember that a person shouldn't just put gas in the car and go. A pre-trip vehicle check is the best way to avoid the potential safety hazards of breaking down.

Tips

- Check the brake system and make sure the battery connection is clean and tight.
- Check filters and fluids, including engine oil, antifreeze/coolant, windshield washer and power steering, brake and transmission fluids. Dirty air filters can waste gas and cause the engine to lose power.
- Check the hoses and belts and replace if they become cracked, brittle, frayed, loose or show signs of excessive wear. These are critical to the proper functioning of the electrical system, air conditioning, power steering and the cooling system.
- Check the tires, including tire pressure and tread. Underinflated tires reduce a vehicle's fuel economy and uneven wear indicates a need for wheel alignment. Tires should also be checked for bulges and bald spots.
- Schedule a tune-up to help the engine deliver the best balance of power and fuel economy.