

Revving up for Summer Driving: Ten Tips

Car Care Tips for Summer

FAIRFAX, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

If you aren't diligent about preparing your vehicle for the summer driving season, you might be saying goodbye to cruising down the open road...and saying hello to waiting for a tow truck in 95-degree heat.

"The summer season is one of the best times to get out and explore the open road, but before you do, make sure your vehicle is ready," says Jim MacPherson, who writes for The Hartford Courant, has served as an expert on cars and driving for Inside Edition and hosts a car-care radio show on WTIC-AM in Connecticut. "After taking your vehicle in for a routine inspection, a simple inspection of your tires, engine fluids, belts and hoses can help you avoid expensive repairs."

Don't let an unexpected breakdown ruin your summer. Following these tips can help you prepare for the heat:

1. Cooling system -- When your engine is cold, check your coolant and make sure your radiator fins have not been clogged by dirt or debris. Be sure to keep fingers away from the electric cooling fan while doing this and never remove the radiator cap if the engine is warm. In addition to coolant, keep an eye on the oil level and the fluids for power steering, brakes and transmission.
2. Temperature Gauge -- If your temperature gauge moves into the red zone or the high temperature warning light goes on, pull over to a safe location and stop your engine. Do not open the radiator cap. Driving a car while the engine is overheated can cause serious damage.
3. Oil -- When the temperatures are high, you need oil that provides extra protection for your engine. A fully synthetic oil such as Mobil 1 is a good choice; it's designed to protect your engine at any temperature and provides fuel economy benefits. Fuel economy grades provide excellent fuel savings compared to higher viscosity grade oils. (For more information about Mobil 1, go to www.mobiloil.com.)
4. Belts and hoses -- Inspect all belts and hoses, looking for signs of wear such as blistering or cracks in the rubber. If they show signs of wear, replace them now.
5. Tires -- In high heat, under-inflated tires are more likely to blow out. Once a month, check the pressure of all tires. To find the correct pressure rating for your vehicle, look inside the driver's doorframe or your owner's manual.
6. Windshield wipers -- The rubber on your wiper blades is susceptible to the summer heat.

Examine your blades, and if they show signs of wear, invest in a new set.

7. Battery -- Hot weather can shorten the life of your vehicle's battery. Inspect the batteries and battery cables for corrosion, cracks and dirt. Many service centers can check the condition of the battery and charging system. If the battery is weak, replace it.

8. Lights -- Check your headlights on low and high beam, as well as your brake lights, turn signals, side marker lights and emergency flashers. If you're towing anything, check your connections to ensure your trailer lights are working properly.

9. Vehicle Exterior -- Wash your vehicle regularly to preserve the finish. After it has dried, apply a coat of wax to the exterior to protect the surface.

10. Emergencies -- Keep an emergency kit in your trunk with some basic items in case your vehicle breaks down. Be sure to include a quart of oil, a gallon of drinking water, jumper cables, windshield washer fluid, basic tools, gloves, a flashlight with some spare batteries and a first aid kit.

"Avoid getting burned by a costly breakdown," says MacPherson. "Take care of your vehicle now and it will be more reliable throughout the hot summer."

For more information on vehicle maintenance, visit www.mobiloil.com.

Source: Exxon Mobil Corporation