

Tips For Safe, Warm-Weather Road Trips

(NAPSA)—Warm weather means an increase in travel and busier roads and highways. But before you hit the road with friends and family, it's important to be certain your car is in good running order.

Keeping Cars Safe

AAA reports receiving 29 million roadside assistance calls every year, with 13 million of those requiring towing, usually to a repair shop.

“Before you take that warm-weather road trip, it's critical to pay attention to a few very crucial items—tire and batteries are very important,” said Robert Sinclair, of AAA. “Batteries don't last forever, so they need to be checked to make sure that they are clean, and if the battery is more than three years old, have a load check performed. Also make sure tires are properly inflated.”

Peter Lord, executive director GM Service Operations, adds that owners should monitor their vehicles for unusual smells, as well as noises, leaks or changes in performance, especially before a long road trip.

“Most breakdowns can be avoided by having a multipoint vehicle inspection performed at a GM Goodwrench dealer. In addition to keeping vehicles safe, the inspections can increase fuel efficiency.” He recommends the following:

Quick Tips

- Keep tires properly inflated: According to the U.S. EPA, you can improve fuel economy by more than 3 percent by keeping tires



A technician changes the oil on a vehicle and inspects under the hood before its owner departs on a long road trip.

properly inflated. Visit www.fuel.economy.gov for information.

- Have routine engine maintenance performed: Fixing an engine that has failed an emissions test may improve gas mileage by 4 percent, on average—the equivalent of 12 cents a gallon.
- Replace the battery if necessary: Weak batteries can lead to breakdowns—possibly at the worst time and place.
- Inspect the brakes: An expert inspection can determine whether brakes are functioning properly with full braking capability.
- Replace worn windshield wipers: Old or worn windshield wipers can lead to poor visibility.
- Adjust headlamps: Properly aimed headlamps are a must for optimal visibility.
- Follow the oil change intervals recommended in the owner's manual: Minimize engine wear and reduce the possibility of internal damage. Over 95 percent of 2004

and newer GM vehicles follow the simplified maintenance schedule, which can save both oil and money. Check the vehicle owner's manual for recommended intervals.

- Check fluid levels: Improper fluid levels—including coolant, oil, power steering, transmission, brake fluid and even washer solvent—can negatively affect vehicle performance, durability and safety.

- Have your belts and hoses inspected: A broken belt or ruptured hose can cause costly engine damage and travel delays.

Keeping Up With Your Car

According to the Car Care Council, most mechanical failures can be traced to neglected maintenance. For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation reports the leading cause of mechanical breakdown on our nation's highways is overheating, a condition that is easily avoidable. Other deficiencies that are simple to detect include low antifreeze/coolant, worn or loose drive belts and defective cooling system hoses.

“Most of these routine maintenance issues can be easily remedied with some preventative care,” explains Lord. “And, addressing a problem early on can save time, money and possibly even a life.”

Goodwrench technicians receive specialized training to provide expert care for all GM cars and trucks, and use genuine GM replacement parts manufactured to the same specifications of the vehicle. For more information, visit www.goodwrench.com.