

Proper preparation is key to summer road trip success



Vincent Muzzio



Vincent Muzzio
Fort Worth Automotive Examiner

June 6, 2011

Summer is that time of year when people love to take road trips. Whether the kids are out of school or you just took some much needed time off work, this time of year is known for epic road trips. However, summer in Texas is extremely rough on cars and trucks and proper preparation should be taken in order to help prevent road trip disasters. The following precautions should be taken to prepare for summer road trips.

When preparing for a road trip, start by walking around the car and look for anything out of the ordinary. Check for proper operation of all exterior lights and signals. The most important part to check on the exterior are the tires. Driving in extreme heat can put major stress on tires and, if they are already damaged, it could spell disaster. Inspect the tires for bubbles, warping, worn/uneven tread, missing rubber (steel mesh/thread visible), and tread depth. The tread should not be below the "wear bars" (the small rubber bumps between the tread). If you observe any of these issues or if you are unsure how to properly inspect your tires,

consult a tire shop or mechanic for a free inspection and replace or repair any problems with the tires. Have your brakes inspected and replaced if needed. You want to be able to stop at your destination.

The next inspection, which is equally important, is under the hood. If you are not mechanically inclined at all, most automotive shops will perform a free inspection on your car's operating and safety systems. For those of you that want to dabble under the hood, there are several areas to inspect. Start off by checking your radiator fluid and topping it off if necessary. Inspect all hoses and belts for any wear or damage and replace as needed. If you have the proper tools, test your battery and alternator for proper voltage and operation. If you do not, this can be done at your local auto parts store. Finally check all fluid levels including motor oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, and power steering fluid. If you are unsure about anything, visit your local auto parts store or mechanic so that you don't get stranded when on your road trip.

The final step to prepare for your summer road trip is to ensure that you have plenty of snacks, water, first aid kit, and any personalized miscellaneous items. To find additional items to keep in your car or truck read the article "**Important items to keep in your car this summer**". Being well prepared for your summer road trip will help ensure that you, your friends, and your family will have a great, safe trip.

Did you enjoy this article and want to read more articles like this? Click the subscribe button above to have new articles sent to you automatically. If you know someone who might enjoy this article, share it with them through the Twitter and Facebook links at the top or bottom of the page.