

Summer AUTO CARE

Travel tips for a safe and successful road trip

A good road trip can be the ultimate spring or summer experience. With the open road ahead, life's troubles seem to melt and there's just the oneness of the driver and the road.

For a road trip to be successful, it's not just a matter of taking to the road and putting the pedal to the metal. There are a host of considerations to make, which can ensure safety and peace of mind when beginning your excursion. The hot sun that can bake the roadway -- and your

body -- can also take its toll on your car, contributing to breakdowns. And there are other factors to be aware of.

Maintenance should never be overlooked when it comes to prepping for a road trip. At the least, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that drivers have their tires, battery, belts, fluids, and air conditioner checked by a qualified mechanic prior to starting any long trip. But the list does not stop there. There are many other precautions to

heed before taking to the road.

* Be sure to have all necessary documents on hand. Nothing can stall a road trip faster than getting pulled over by a police officer and being without your license, registration and proof of insurance. These are required documents to operate a vehicle, and it's definitely worth a second check in your wallet and glove compartment to be sure they are where they should be.

* Get an oil change.



Prevent bugs, sap and other substances from ruining a vehicle

Keeping vehicles looking pristine requires care and diligent cleaning. So many day-to-day activities and environmental materials have the potential to damage the finish on cars and trucks. While winter weather and chemicals used to keep roadways passable are often blamed for affecting the appearance of cars and trucks, winter is not the only time of year when substances can cause damage to vehicles.

Spring and summer are prime seasons for sap, birds and insects. These times of year tend to see an uptick in road work as well, and such projects can contribute to damage caused by loose asphalt, gravel and tar. Addressing problems resulting from tree sap, insect and bird droppings and tar may not be something to look forward to, but it is necessary to keep cars looking pristine.

Tree sap

According to Cars.com, an automotive information resource and vehicle sales website, although tree sap won't cause immediate damage

to vehicle paint, it should not be ignored. Over time, sap can become more difficult to remove, etch through the clear coat on the vehicle and cause discoloration. When the temperature is hot, damage from sap can accelerate.

On windows and windshields, drivers may be able to gently remove dried sap with a razor blade. However, use cleaning products on more delicate paint. Automotive stores sell speciality sap and tar cleaners. Otherwise, you can try rubbing alcohol. It may take a few attempts to remove sap entirely.

Insects and bird droppings

Splattered bugs and avian surprises dropped from above can be a messy, unsightly nuisance. Their acidic composition also may cause them to damage paint over time. Bugs and droppings can be sticky, so you will need to work with something that will remove the splatter without removing the paint in the process. A product like WD-40 may help. This oily product is normally used on rust and hinges. When applied with a

cloth and allowed to penetrate the stain, it can loosen difficult-to-remove sticky substances. Always test any product you use in an inconspicuous spot first to make sure it doesn't damage or discolor your the paint.

Insects or droppings that are fresh may come off relatively easily with a good washing or hosing off of the car. Retailers also sell specialty insect sponges to remove bugs and other debris.

Tar

Soap and water will do little to remove tar and other petroleum-based products from vehicles. Commercial tar removal products use a strong solvent or detergent to loosen the tar. This may include kerosene, mineral spirits or another item mixed with lubricants. Go slowly and use caution so that you remove the tar and not the paint.

Drivers who are hesitant to clean their vehicles of common residue can have their cars or trucks professionally detailed, leaving the work in the hands of experts.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Ready your car for spring and summer travel

The return of warm weather marks the return of road trips for millions of motorists across the country. Whether going to the beach or heading off to parts unknown, hitting the open road with the windows down is a time-honored tradition for drivers of all ages.

But such road trips can prove disastrous if drivers don't take the right steps to prepare their vehicles for spring and summer travel. The following are a few ways motorists can ensure their car is ready to tackle the open road.

* Tighten things up. Loose parts, such as exhaust clamps, license plates, and interior trim panels, can create rattles and cause parts to get damaged or fall off. What's more, rattling sounds can be a noisy nuisance for drivers and passengers alike. Permatex Threadlockers can be used to keep the nuts and bolts from coming loose and save parts replacement costs. They also have a threadlocker for plastic fasteners, which vehicle manufacturers have grown to rely on more and more.

* Wash your car. A newly washed car not only looks good, but it's often much safer as well. Take your car to a car wash a few days before the trip and have the vehicle thoroughly cleaned. A thorough cleaning will remove dirt and grime from the vehicle's undercarriage, not to mention unsightly bird droppings and water spots or salt stains leftover from winter.

* Fix foggy headlight lenses. Many spring and summer road trippers travel at night so their days can be spent soaking up some sun at the beach or lake. Before heading off for parts unknown, motorists should inspect their headlight lenses to reduce risk of accident. If the lenses are yellowed and foggy, that's likely because salt, ozone and road debris has dulled them to a point where vision can be impaired, placing drivers and their passengers at risk. But foggy lenses don't mandate an expensive headlight



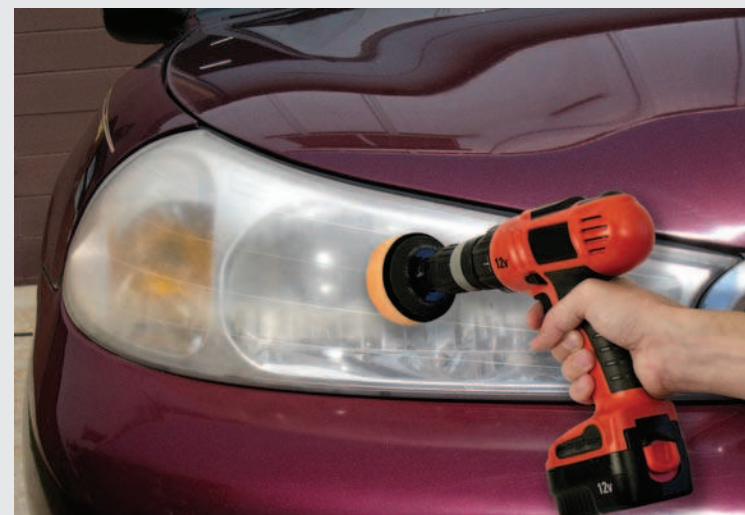
replacement. In fact, The Permatex Lens Renew Kit makes it easy to clean up and polish dull headlight lenses and restore them to like new condition, improving your car's lighting and driver visibility.

* Check the battery. Over time, battery terminals and cables will start to corrode. Such corrosion will eventually eat away at the battery's parts, creating a bad connection that sooner or later will require the battery be replaced. Check the battery before your trip and remember to clean the battery periodically as part of routine vehicle maintenance.

* Address windshield nicks and bullseyes. Nicks and chips in the windshields are a common problem regardless of the season. But such damage is most prevalent in the winter because of the extra debris that's on the road. These nicks and cracks need to get fixed as soon as possible to prevent them from spreading and resulting in the need for a windshield replacement. Oftentimes, motorists can address nicks and bullseyes in their own driveways in a matter of minutes.

For example, the Permatex Bullseye Windshield Repair kit is tailor made for do-it-yourselfers, requiring no heating or mixing while ensuring each repair is virtually undetectable.

More information on easy repairs that you can do yourself can be found at www.permatex.com.



4 ways to conserve fuel and stop paying so much at the pump

Fuel prices have traditionally been at their highest during the summer months. That's unfortunate for vacationers and road trip enthusiasts who must budget the cost of fuel into their vacation expenses. Those costs can be considerable, especially if gas continues to hover around \$4 per gallon as it has for much of 2012.

But as costly as gas has become, drivers can still mitigate those costs by employing a few strategies aimed at increasing their driving efficiency. The following are a few ways drivers can offset high fuel costs regardless of the time of year.

1. Maintain a consistent speed. Though it might be hard to maintain a consistent speed when driving during rush hour, it should not be too difficult to do so when hitting the open road. If most of your driving is done on the highway, go easy on your engine by maintaining a consistent speed. The easier you are on the engine, the less taxed that engine will be and the less fuel it will need as a result. If going on a long road trip or if your daily commute involves long stretches of highway driving, rely on your vehicle's cruise control to make things easier on your

engine and conserve fuel.

2. Don't drive when you can walk or bike. It might sound simple, but the best way to conserve fuel is not to use it at all. During the warmer months, walk or ride your bicycle when performing local errands. This is especially beneficial during the summer, when gas prices are typically higher. Save a few gallons of gas by running errands on foot or on your bicycle. If a physical



condition makes it hard for you to walk or bike, make use of public transportation when you need to travel locally.

3. Obey the speed limit. The open road entices many drivers to put the pedal to the metal, but driving over the speed limit is both illegal and expensive. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that drivers pay an additional \$0.31 per gallon for every five miles they drive over 60 mph. Since gas prices have already hovered around \$4 per gallon for much of the year, drivers would be wise to obey the speed limit and conserve their fuel as well as their money.

4. Don't make your vehicle into a traveling closet. Many drivers keep excess materials in their cars, whether it's a cooler for picnics, a set of golf clubs or an old baby stroller. Excess weight will rear its ugly head at the pump. The DOE notes that an extra 100 pounds in a vehicle can reduce its miles per gallon by as much as two percent. Before hitting the highway, check your trunk and the backseat and remove any unnecessary items.

Drivers spend a considerable amount of money at the gas pump each week. But a few simple strategies to conserve fuel can save money and help the planet at the same time.