

Summer Travel Safety 101: Getting Your Ride Road Trip Ready

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Whether historic U.S. Route 1 is your main vacation drag or you're cruising for a day on Pacific Coast Highway or motoring west on the route that's the best, summer means one thing to many Americans...road trip.

Before you sally forth, you might want to tackle a few technical "to dos" to ensure your trip is as smooth as your driving style.

1. **Total recall.** Similar to getting an annual physical from the doctor, it's smart to stay in the know about your vehicle.

To find out if a vehicle has been involved in a safety recall or service campaign, Toyota owners can check their vehicle identification number (VIN) – found on the driver's side dashboard or driver's side door where it latches – at <http://www.toyota.com/recall>. They can also use the owner's app (available through iTunes or Google play) to scan in their VIN.

To check out a vehicle from another manufacturer, owners can access the <https://vinrel.safercar.gov/vin/>.

If your vehicle is involved in a safety recall, the manufacturer is obligated to provide a free remedy; so contact your local dealer and make an appointment to handle the issue.

2. **No tired tires.** Before taking those tires on the road, focus on: air, wear and spare.
 - Air – A properly inflated tire can help you avoid a flat. Refer to the owner's manual or a label inside the doorframe for the correct pressure and check tires when they're cold (haven't been driven on for three hours) for most accurate reading.
 - Wear – Take five minutes to inspect for excessive or irregular wear. If tread is worn to 1/16 of an inch, it's time to replace. Irregular wear patterns indicate tires might need rotation or realignment.
 - Spare – Make sure the back-up has your back and run the spare through the same tests as your other tires.
3. **Take care for rubber wear.** Inspect belts, hoses and wiper blades for blisters, cracks or cuts. All are susceptible to summer heat, so replace if not in tip-top condition. And make sure hose connections are secure.
4. **Get plenty of fluids.** Be good to your trusted steed and follow up on fluids: oil, brake, automatic transmission, power steering, windshield washer and coolant. And if it's time to have the oil changed or coolant system flushed, just do it.

5. **Light it up.** Check headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, interior and trailer lights.

6. **Be cool.** AC working? Check. 'Nuff said.