

Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection Checklist

Before Every Highway Trip

Tires & Wheels

☐ **Check tire pressure** (all 4 tires + spare)

- Recommended PSI: ____ (check door jamb sticker)
- Front left: ____ PSI
- Front right: ____ PSI
- Rear left: ____ PSI
- Rear right: ____ PSI
- Spare tire: ____ PSI

☐ **Inspect tire tread depth**

- Use penny test (minimum 2/32")
- Replace if: Worn, cracked, or bulging

☐ **Check for tire damage**

- Look for cuts, cracks, bulges
- Remove debris stuck in tread
- Check sidewalls for damage

☐ **Verify spare tire condition**

- Properly inflated
- Not expired (check date code)
- Jack and lug wrench present

☐ **Test lug nuts**

- All lug nuts tight and present
-

Fluids

☐ **Engine oil**

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Add ☐ Change needed
- Last changed: ____ miles ago
- Next change due: ____ miles

☐ **Coolant/Antifreeze**

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Low ☐ Add
- Color: ☐ Clear ☐ Rusty (needs service)

☐ **Brake fluid**

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Low ☐ Add
- Color: ☐ Clear ☐ Dark (needs change)

☐ **Power steering fluid**

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Low ☐ Add

☐ **Windshield washer fluid**

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Fill up
- Works: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ **Transmission fluid** (if accessible)

- Level: ☐ Full ☐ Check with mechanic
-

Lights & Electrical

☐ **Headlights**

- Low beams: ☐ Both work ☐ Left out ☐ Right out
- High beams: ☐ Both work ☐ Left out ☐ Right out

☐ **Turn signals**

- Front left: ☐ Works
- Front right: ☐ Works
- Rear left: ☐ Works
- Rear right: ☐ Works

☐ **Brake lights**

- Left: ☐ Works
- Center: ☐ Works
- Right: ☐ Works

☐ **Reverse lights**

- ☐ Both work

☐ **License plate lights**

- ☐ Work

☐ **Hazard lights**

- ☐ All four corners flash

☐ **Battery**

- Terminals: ☐ Clean ☐ Needs cleaning
 - Cables: ☐ Tight ☐ Corroded
 - Age: ____ years (replace after 3-5 years)
-

Brakes

☐ **Brake pedal feel**

- ☐ Firm and responsive
- ☐ Soft or spongy (needs service)
- ☐ Goes to floor (URGENT)

☐ **Brake pads/shoes**

- Last replaced: ____ miles ago
- ☐ Good condition ☐ Need inspection

☐ **Brake sounds**

- ☐ No noise
- ☐ Squealing (check soon)
- ☐ Grinding (service immediately)

☐ **Parking brake**

- ☐ Holds vehicle on incline
 - ☐ Releases fully
-

Wipers & Visibility

☐ **Windshield wipers**

- ☐ No streaking or skipping
- ☐ Replace if cracked or worn

☐ **Rear wiper** (if equipped)

- ☐ Works properly

☐ **Windshield condition**

- ☐ No cracks or chips
- ☐ Small chip (repair before trip)
- ☐ Large crack (replace before highway driving)

☐ **All mirrors**

- ☐ Clean and properly adjusted
- ☐ No cracks

☐ **Windows**

- ☐ All operate properly
 - ☐ Clean inside and out
-

Engine & Under Hood

☐ **Air filter**

- ☐ Clean ☐ Dirty (replace)
- Last replaced: ____ miles ago

☐ **Battery connections**

- ☐ Tight and corrosion-free

☐ **Belts**

- ☐ No cracks, fraying, or glazing
- ☐ Proper tension

☐ **Hoses**

- ☐ No cracks, bulges, or leaks
- ☐ Clamps tight

☐ **Check for leaks**

- ☐ No puddles under car
 - Check for: Oil, coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid
-

Climate Control

☐ **Air conditioning**

- ☐ Blows cold
- ☐ Weak (needs recharge)

☐ **Heating**

- ☐ Works properly

☐ **Defroster**

- ☐ Front works
 - ☐ Rear works (if equipped)
-

Fuel System

☐ **Fuel level**

- ☐ Full tank for departure

☐ **Gas cap**

- ☐ Seals properly
 - ☐ Check engine light: ☐ Off ☐ On (check before trip)
-

Safety Equipment

☐ **Spare tire & tools**

- ☐ Spare properly inflated
- ☐ Jack present and works
- ☐ Lug wrench present
- ☐ Know how to use them

☐ **Emergency kit**

- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Flashlight with batteries
- ☐ Jumper cables or jump starter
- ☐ Reflective triangles or flares
- ☐ Basic tools
- ☐ Duct tape

☐ **Emergency supplies**

- ☐ Water bottles

- ☐ Non-perishable snacks
- ☐ Blanket
- ☐ Phone charger (car adapter)
- ☐ Portable phone battery

☐ **Documentation**

- ☐ Registration current
- ☐ Insurance card present
- ☐ Roadside assistance info
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers

Interior & Comfort

☐ **Seat belts**

- ☐ All retract properly
- ☐ No fraying or damage
- ☐ Buckles work

☐ **Horn**

- ☐ Works

☐ **Dashboard warning lights**

- ☐ All go out after starting
- Active warnings: _____

☐ **Gauges**

- ☐ All work properly

Professional Inspection Recommended If:

- ☐ Trip is over 500 miles ☐ Vehicle has over 75,000 miles ☐ Haven't had service in 6+ months ☐ Planning to drive through mountains ☐ Winter trip in cold climate ☐ Any warning lights active

Mechanic Inspection Date: _____

Mechanic notes:

Trip Information

Departure Date: _____ **Destination:** _____ **Total Distance:** _____ miles **Estimated Driving Time:** _____ hours

Current Odometer: _____

☐ Final Checklist

- ☐ All critical items checked and OK
- ☐ Fuel tank full
- ☐ Emergency kit complete
- ☐ Phone fully charged
- ☐ Route planned
- ☐ Weather checked
- ☐ Accommodation booked (if overnight)
- ☐ Someone knows your route and ETA

Notes:

Safety First: If any critical item fails inspection, have it serviced BEFORE your trip. Your safety is worth more than any delay.

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