



Vehicle Maintenance

Why is vehicle maintenance so important? The answer should be obvious. A driver spending a full day on the road needs to feel confident that his vehicle will function efficiently and safely under all driving conditions. The owner of the vehicle is interested in preventive maintenance, too. The simplest and most economical way of protecting the original investment is through preventive maintenance. Use the owner's manual for a guide.

A preventive maintenance program cannot be considered good without record keeping. Each vehicle should have its own maintenance and repair file, including a lubrication record, an inspection and repair record, and a schedule outlining a program of periodic maintenance and inspection. If the vehicle is leased, the record should identify the contractor supplying the vehicle.

Drivers should be responsible for knowing the mechanical condition of their vehicles. It is the driver who must assure that at the start of each trip that the vehicle is in good condition.

Before starting off, you should check inside the vehicle and be sure the floor is free of obstructions and debris such as tools, rags or soiled clothing. You should also take a close look at the seat and seat belts to be sure they are sound.

Start up the engine and watch the instruments—they should give a normal reading. While the engine is running, heater, defroster and windshield wipers should be checked.

Check the emergency equipment. The fire extinguisher should be charged and operable, and there should be adequate flares or reflective devices.

Check the headlights, body lights and reflectors outside the vehicle. The driver should be sure tires, and wheels are in good condition.

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