



ACCENT

Traveling Safely by Car this Summer

Many of us will be traveling by car as part of our “summer vacation”. How can we make sure it’s a safe and successful adventure? What should be your priorities when making a trek across the country or even just up north? Listed below are tips and recommendations to keep you and your loved ones safe as you drive to your destinations over the next couple of months.

Prior to departure:

1. **Have your vehicle checked over.** Check fluid levels: oil, brake, transmission, windshield wiper fluid. Make sure your brakes are in good condition.
2. **Know how to change or patch a tire.** Does your vehicle have a spare tire? New vehicles may have a patch kit and inflation machine, do you know how to use it? If not, you should practice before you head out!
3. **Make sure that you have your lug nut key with you.** If you have tire damage that requires the tire to be removed and you don’t have that key you just extended your downtime.
4. **Plan your route.** Program a GPS and bring paper maps (just in case you end up in an area where you don’t have a signal or your battery dies). Tell a family member or friend your intended route, so someone not in your vehicle will know where you are. Plan your stops for rest and meal breaks, along with gas fill ups. Know if you will need money for toll booths and if there are detours for construction.
5. **Check your emergency kits.** You should have one for the vehicle (flares, cones or flags, jumper cables, etc.) and one for people (first aid kit). If traveling through an area with the potential for inclement weather be sure to include the appropriate gear like blankets, extra socks and mittens/gloves.
6. **Pack hand sanitizer and face masks,** for your protection and in case any of the places you decide to stop require them.
7. **Check out your intended destination** to confirm the status there and make sure that once you arrive you will still be able to enjoy your trip.

During the Trip:

1. **If traveling with children, bring things to do during the trip.** Things like coloring books and crayons, books to read, playing cards, Legos for building, crafting kits like beading or macramé. Electronic devices can be useful too, but consider limiting screen time. Try games that everyone in the car can participate in as well, like I Spy or MadLibs.
2. **Stock water bottles and snacks** in case you get stuck and need to sustain yourselves until help arrives – even if it is an hour or two, in 116 degree heat with no water is not the place you want to be.
3. **Look for places to stop that offer contactless services,** such as curbside pick-ups or require masks and adhere to social distancing guidelines.
4. **Allow yourself time and freedom** to stop and check out any interesting landmarks along the way -- As long as they are outdoors and you can safely social distance!
5. **Stop and take photos to document your trip!** Just don’t post those photos online...yet! Post those photos when you get home, so you don’t tip folks off that your home is empty right now.

After the Trip:

1. Take your vehicle in to check fluids, tires (rotation may be in order depending on how far you traveled), just overall check on the vehicle.
2. Unload all unnecessary items from the vehicle like cold weather gear or perishable food items.
3. Document any important notes or thoughts about how to make your next trip even better than the last!

Have a safe and fun summer!

