

Summer Car Checklist

A checklist for preparing a car for summer heat.

Cooling system

- ☐ Check coolant level when cold and top up with the correct mix.
Low or weak coolant is a leading cause of summer overheating.
- ☐ Flush and replace coolant if it is old or discolored.
- ☐ Inspect the radiator and condenser for blockages and debris.
- ☐ Confirm the cooling fan and fan clutch operate correctly.
- ☐ Check hoses for soft spots, swelling or leaks.
- ☐ Verify the radiator cap seals and holds pressure.

Air conditioning and comfort

- ☐ Test the AC for cold airflow at idle and while driving.
- ☐ Have the refrigerant recharged if cooling is weak.
Persistent weak cooling can mean a leak; have it diagnosed by a technician.
- ☐ Replace the cabin air filter for strong, clean airflow.
- ☐ Check that all vents and fan speeds work.
- ☐ Confirm windows and the sunroof open and close fully.
- ☐ Consider a sunshade to limit cabin heat when parked.

Tires and wheels

- ☐ Check tire pressure cold, since heat raises it during driving.
- ☐ Inspect tread depth and look for cracks, bulges or aging.
- ☐ Replace tires showing dry rot or sidewall cracking.
Hot pavement raises blowout risk on worn or aged tires.
- ☐ Rotate tires if due to even out wear.
- ☐ Confirm the spare is inflated and tools are present.
- ☐ Verify the TPMS light is off after checking pressures.

Battery and electrical

- ☐ Test the battery, since heat shortens its life faster than cold.
- ☐ Clean terminals and confirm they are tight and corrosion-free.
- ☐ Check the alternator is charging correctly.
- ☐ Confirm the battery is secure with no swelling or leaks.
- ☐ Replace a weak or aged battery before a long summer trip.
- ☐ Verify all lights and electrical accessories work.

Fluids and engine

- ☐ Check engine oil level and change it if a service is due.
- ☐ Verify brake, power steering and transmission fluids.
- ☐ Top up windshield washer fluid for summer bugs and dust.
- ☐ Inspect belts for cracking and glazing from heat.
- ☐ Look under the car for any fresh fluid leaks.
- ☐ Confirm no warning lights remain lit after start-up.

Visibility and hot-weather readiness

- ☐ Replace worn wiper blades dried out by sun and heat.
- ☐ Clean the windshield and apply a water repellent for sudden storms.
- ☐ Confirm all lights work for long summer drives.
- ☐ Pack water for occupants and a small emergency kit.
- ☐ Never leave children or pets in a parked car in heat.
- ☐ Confirm roadside assistance and insurance are current.