

Vehicle Safety Checklist

A checklist for keeping a vehicle safe to drive.

Tires and wheels

- ☐ Check tire pressure on all tires and the spare.
- ☐ Measure tread depth and confirm it exceeds the legal minimum.
Worn tires lose grip and dramatically lengthen wet braking distances.
- ☐ Inspect for cuts, bulges, cracks or embedded objects.
- ☐ Confirm lug nuts are present and tight.
- ☐ Check for uneven wear that signals alignment or suspension issues.
- ☐ Verify the spare and tire-change tools are present and usable.

Brakes and steering

- ☐ Confirm the brake pedal is firm and braking is straight.
- ☐ Listen for grinding or squealing that signals worn pads.
Grinding brakes need immediate inspection by a mechanic.
- ☐ Verify the parking brake holds on an incline.
- ☐ Check the steering for excessive play or pulling.
- ☐ Confirm ABS and brake warning lights are off.
- ☐ Check power steering fluid and listen for suspension clunks.

Lights and visibility

- ☐ Test headlights, high beams and that they aim correctly.
- ☐ Check brake lights, turn signals and hazard lights.
- ☐ Verify reverse, fog and license plate lights.
- ☐ Confirm wipers clear the glass and washers spray.
- ☐ Clean the windshield, mirrors and lights.
- ☐ Test the defroster and demister for clear visibility.

Restraints and occupant safety

- ☐ Confirm all seatbelts latch, retract and are undamaged.
- ☐ Check child seats are correctly installed and within their limits.
Follow the seat and vehicle manuals for correct child-seat fitting.
- ☐ Verify airbag warning lights clear at start-up.
- ☐ Confirm head restraints are present and adjusted.
- ☐ Check that doors and child locks operate correctly.
- ☐ Ensure no loose objects can become projectiles in a crash.

Recalls and systems

- ☐ Search for open recalls using your VIN and have them fixed.
Recall repairs are typically free at a manufacturer's dealer.
- ☐ Address any dashboard warning lights promptly.
- ☐ Verify driver-assistance systems function as intended.
- ☐ Check that the horn sounds clearly.
- ☐ Confirm the engine and transmission show no warning faults.

- ☐ Keep the maintenance and recall history up to date.

Emergency equipment

- ☐ Carry a warning triangle and reflective vest.
- ☐ Pack a first-aid kit and check its contents.
- ☐ Keep a flashlight with working batteries.
- ☐ Carry jumper cables or a portable jump starter.
- ☐ Stock water and seasonal emergency supplies.
- ☐ Confirm a fire extinguisher where required and keep it accessible.