



News Release

Media Contact:
Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D.
Vice President Public Affairs
757-233-3825
Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com

AAA TO RESCUE MORE THAN 8 MILLION MOTORISTS DURING THE SUMMER

As summer travel revs up, nation's largest motor club cautions drivers of dangers on the open road if not properly prepared

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (May 31, 2013) – More than 31 million Americans kicked off the summer travel season with a road trip Memorial Day weekend, but plans were dampened for approximately a quarter of a million motorists that AAA needed to rescue at the roadside. AAA expects between the major summer holidays of Memorial Day and Labor Day to aid over eight million motorists, and cautions drivers that auto maintenance is key to avoiding summertime travel breakdowns.

“The best way to avoid a breakdown during a trip is to ensure your car is properly maintained before hitting the road,” said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Affairs for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “But unexpected breakdowns can still occur. For your safety and security, and that of your passengers, be sure to have access to a roadside assistance provider like AAA.”

AAA recommends that motorists perform the following maintenance tasks before hitting the road. An acronym of **S.A.F.E.T.R.I.P.** is used to help motorists remember these essential tasks.

Service your Battery

AAA Tidewater Virginia will assist nearly 60,000 motorists with dead batteries during the summer driving season—taking more than 10,000 battery service calls at the roadside. Summer heat breaks down car batteries internally and accelerates the rate of corrosion on the terminals. Both conditions can lead to insufficient electrical power being available and leave a motorist stranded without warning. Depending on local climate and vehicle usage patterns, most car batteries have a three to five year service life. If your battery is more than three years old, have it tested by a professional technician to help avoid unexpected trouble.

Air Conditioning Check

A vehicle without air conditioning can be a hot and uncomfortable environment for travelers during the summer months. Automotive air conditioning systems do not require routine maintenance, but a system that is operating marginally is more likely to fail in hot weather. If you have noticed a decrease in cooling capability, have your air conditioning system examined by a qualified technician before setting out on a trip.

Fluids for Windshield Washer/Wipers

Rain, insects, grime and other debris on a windshield will compromise the driver's vision and safety. The life of a rubber wiper insert is typically six to 12 months depending on its exposure to heat, dirt, sunlight and rain. If your wipers leave streaks or cannot clear the windshield in one swipe they should be replaced. Also, check the windshield washer fluid level and top it off with a solution formulated to aid in the removal of insects and other debris. Be sure to test the washer spray nozzles for proper operation and aim before leaving on a trip.

Emergency Roadside Kit

While preventative measures go a long way toward minimizing breakdowns, unexpected vehicle problems can still arise. AAA encourages motorists to update their emergency roadside kit every season. The kit should include a mobile phone and car charger; a flashlight with extra batteries; a first-aid kit; drinking water; extra snacks/food for your travelers and any pets; battery booster cables; and emergency flares or reflectors.

-MORE-

Tire Inflation and Condition

“Roughly 8,000 drivers will call AAA Tidewater for help with a flat tire during the summer travel season, and many of those problems could be avoided with a quick tire inspection,” said Blumling. “Begin every tire inspection with a pressure check when the tires are cold and the car has not been driven recently.” Use a quality gauge to make sure all five tires are inflated to the pressure recommended by the vehicle manufacturer—this can be found in the owner’s manual or on a sticker usually attached to the driver’s door jamb, or sometimes inside the gas cap door. Properly inflated tires increase safety and fuel economy, which will reduce fuel costs during a trip. Finally, inspect the tread depth and overall condition of the tires. Worn tires in need of replacement are much more likely to suffer punctures and other problems.

Regular Maintenance

This summer, AAA will remedy over half of motorists’ car problems at the roadside and get them back on the go. However, an estimated 55,000 drivers will suffer more significant troubles and need towing to a place of repair. If it’s almost time for scheduled maintenance, have your car serviced before a trip. If it has been some time since the vehicle last saw the inside of a repair shop, consider having it thoroughly inspected by a qualified technician who can identify potential problems before they put a damper on any travel plans.

Inspect under the Hood: Belts, Hoses and Fluids

Replace accessory drive belts that are cracked, glazed or frayed, as well as coolant hoses that are visibly worn, brittle, bulging or excessively soft. Check for leaks around hose clamps and at the radiator and water pump. Check the engine coolant level, along with that of other important under hood fluids such as the engine oil, brake fluid, transmission fluid and power steering fluid. A low fluid level could indicate a leak or other problem that should be checked out by a professional technician.

Prepare and Plan Ahead

Part of the fun of taking a road trip is planning it. Chart out driving routes and, when possible, reserve your accommodations in advance. Be prepared for busy roads during the popular travel times and, if possible, consider leaving earlier or later to avoid traffic. For increased safety, assign a passenger as the designated texter/caller to avoid distracted driving. AAA recommends drivers allow plenty of time to reach their destinations, and stop in a safe location every 100 miles or two hours to avoid drowsy or fatigued driving.

If any part of the road trip vehicle preparation process seems overwhelming, AAA can help consumers identify quality auto repair shops to assist in the maintenance and repair of their vehicles. AAA offers the Approved Auto Repair program as a free public service. Repair facilities approved by AAA meet and maintain stringent standards for training, equipment, cleanliness and customer service. Motorists can look for the Approved Auto Repair sign at local shops, or search for a nearby AAA-approved shops online at AAA.com/Repair.

As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA](https://twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA).

AAA news releases, high resolution images, broadcast-quality video, fact sheets and podcasts are available on the AAA NewsRoom at AAA.com/news.

Stay connected with AAA on the web via:



YouTube.com/AAA

###