

## Vehicle Maintenance

### General

1. Best to use a Top Tier gasoline. See: <http://www.toptiergas.com/retailers/>
2. Get into the habit of checking your vehicle for obvious problems like low tires, objects in tread, fluids leaking under vehicle, and parking lot damage.
3. Not normal for there to be slack in steering.
4. Wiper blades-replace before they scratch your windshield. Auto stores will replace for you.
5. Check to see if radiator is covered with bugs. Hose or power wash at car wash. Do not get too close or you may damage the radiator.

### Starting Car

1. Give car 15-30 seconds after starting before putting in gear.
2. Don't drive hard until you've driven a few miles.
3. Get in habit of listening to how quickly the engine starts and how it sounds. Notice if there are any changes.
4. If check engine light stays on the cause of the problem should be known and sometimes repaired, sometimes ignored. An auto supply store can check your car and read codes usually at no charge. They can advise you if it is serious. You may have to go to more than one store.
5. Any battery that is more than 4 years old is high risk for dying. If it has ever been completely run down it will not last long before it fails. Wal-Mart or auto stores will not battery if it is not located under hood. You will have to go to mechanic shop.

### Tires

1. Tire pressure-check every two weeks and look carefully for damage like cuts. See sticker inside door for recommended pressure. This is the cold temperature (before driving) pressure. Normally is about 32 lbs.
2. Observe side walls for cracks or cuts
3. Check for even wear of tread-monthly. Uneven wear indicates a problem with wheel alignment that is likely caused by worn suspension components.
4. When worn to point wear-indicator bar tire must be replaced.
5. Have tires rotated about every 10,000 miles to even out the wear. Have brakes inspected at same time.
6. In fall and winter-need to add air. In summer may need to let some out.
7. NEVER ever drive with tire more than 5 lbs. low.
8. Check or have someone check pressure in your spare when oil is changed.
9. Be sure you have a jack in your car even if you won't be the one to use it.

### Brakes

1. Normally should last at least 40,000 miles, but when in doubt have them checked.
2. Have inspected whenever you have tires rotated.
3. Signs of worn brakes are:

- If they squeal or squeak when driving. Some cars have a brake-wear indicator that makes a high-pitched scraping noise as a warning.
- If they squeak or grind when stopping-an occasional squeak when stopping is normal.
- Pulling to left or right is not normal.
- Change in brake pedal feel-have checked immediately.

### **Lights**

1. Check monthly-lights-low and high beams, flashers. Generally the auto stores (O'Reilly and Auto Zone) will assist with lights.

### **Air Conditioner**

1. If air conditioner is not cooling well 1) it may need Freon added or 2) possibly a leak repaired. Some shops charge as little as \$29.95 to check your air conditioner + cost of Freon.
2. Some vehicles have an air filter up behind the glove box that can get plugged. Depending on vehicle it is easy to change.

### **Checking Under Hood**

1. There is a maintenance schedule in owner's manual that should be followed. If you don't have an owner's manual follow directions given by workers at oil change facility. Be cautious. For example: You should get 30,000 with one air filter.
2. Unless you are doing lots of stop-in-go driving you can go 5,000 miles between oil changes.
3. Periodically while you are getting gasoline raise the hood and check:
  - Antifreeze level in radiator overflow tank. Most cars have a clear tank for the antifreeze so you don't have to take cap off the radiator. NEVER remove cap from radiator while the engine is hot.
  - Windshield washer fluid. It is better to use Rain-X brand than just water.
  - Engine oil every thousand miles until you are certain than car isn't using too much oil.
  - The area under where you park your car for evidence of any fluids leaking.
  - Hoses for swelling or cracking.
  - Frayed belts.
  - Battery water generally doesn't need to be checked between oil changes.

### **Keep in vehicle**

1. Tire pressure gauge
2. Jumper cables
3. Flash light
4. Paper towels &/or rags

**If your car overheats (steam from under hood or gauge shows hot) do NOT continue to drive it. Do NOT remove radiator cap! Do NOT add cold water while still hot.**

***Do not be oversold*** Do not let someone sell you something without getting another opinion.