

Making The Back-To-School Car Safe: Top Five DIY Checklist

AutoMD.com Helps Parents Make Sure Their Son's or Daughter's Back-to-School Car is Safe and Ready to Drive

Carson, CA -- August 17, 2010 -- Whether your back-to-school kid is driving to college or high school, it is important that his/her vehicle is in tip-top shape and, above all, safe to drive. Sadly, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens¹, and neglected vehicle maintenance leads to 2,600 deaths annually and nearly 100,000 disabling injuries.² With this sobering data in mind, AutoMD.com's team of expert mechanics has released its Top Five DIY Checklist for the Back-to-School Car, along with some practical advice to help parents ensure their kid's safety on the road-- and their peace of mind at home.

AutoMD.com's Top Five DIY Checklist for the Back-to-School Car

Running through this checklist with your son/daughter should help encourage vigilance about vehicle maintenance when you are not around. For more in-depth information and How-Tos, click here (<http://www.automd.com/About-AutoMD/Press/8-17-2010>). In all cases, if you are not sure the car is safe to drive, you should have it inspected by your trusted local repair shop before your son/daughter hits the road.

1. Check the tires

- Check tire pressure, tread depth and wear pattern.
- Inspect the tires for tread separation, bulges, and weather cracking.
- Make sure that the vehicle has a usable spare tire.

How to check tire pressure: <http://www.automd.com/15/how-to-check-tire-pressure/>

How to change a flat tire: <http://www.automd.com/186/how-to-replace-a-flat-tire/>

2. Check the Brakes

- If the brake rotor is visible through the wheels, inspect the rotor surface for excessive wear and discoloration.
- Check for a firm brake pedal.
- Start the car and check for any brake warning lights on the dash.
- Road test the car and apply the brakes. Make sure the car stops straight and smooth, and there are no squealing or grinding sounds.

3. Check the Lights

- Check the headlights (high and low beams) and taillights.
- Check the brake lights, turn signals, and hazard lights.
- Check the interior, dome, trunk and hood lights.

How to replace a headlight: <http://www.automd.com/585/how-to-replace-a-headlight/>
How to adjust the headlights: <http://www.automd.com/24/how-to-adjust-a-headlight/>

4. Check Under the Hood

- Check drive belts for damage and proper tension.
- Check hoses for cracks, leaks and deterioration.
- Check the date code on the battery, and inspect the battery cables for corrosion.
- Check for a clogged air filter.
- Inspect the fluid levels and check for leaks: Engine oil, transmission fluid (engine must be started and warm), power steering fluid, brake fluid, engine coolant, and windshield washer fluid. Add fluid or change the fluid if necessary.

How to replace a serpentine belt: <http://www.automd.com/46/how-to-replace-a-serpentine-belt/>

How to replace a radiator hose: <http://www.automd.com/149/how-to-replace-an-upper-radiator-hose/>

How to replace an air filter: <http://www.automd.com/11/how-to-replace-an-air-filter/>

How to replace a battery: <http://www.automd.com/6/how-to-replace-a-battery/>

How to change your oil and filter: <http://www.automd.com/101/how-to-change-engine-oil-and-filter/>

5. Check the Glove Compartment

- Owner's manual with maintenance records
- Current registration and insurance
- Roadside assistance information and Emergency phone numbers
- Flashlight/Maps/portable GPS system.

Vehicle Knowledge and Safe Driving Check

Once the vehicle has been checked out, AutoMD.com recommends that you go for a drive with your son/daughter to make sure he/she understand any quirks the vehicle might have -- and how everything operates, from car alarm to cruise control to hazard lights to GPS system. Run through the different warning lights, what each indicates and how to respond (i.e., check oil, overheating, etc.). This is also a great time to review basic safe driving and traffic rules and to reinforce the dangers and consequence of speeding, and drinking/texting/cell phoning and/or surfing while driving. Run through a safety and 'what to do' protocol for a breakdown or accident – and in the event he/she is pulled over by the police. Make sure the vehicle has some form of roadside assistance and is equipped with a toolkit, emergency kit, and flares, etc. And, if you can, teach your son/daughter how to change a tire (for guidance, check AutoMD.com's How-to change a tire: <http://www.automd.com/186/how-to-replace-a-flat-tire/>).

“Sending kids off to school in their own car is an important rite of passage... but one that can lead to sleepless nights for parents,” said AutoMD.com President Shane Evangelist. “At AutoMD.com, we believe that information is not only power, but it is security. By providing a checklist that encourages kids to really know and understand their vehicle, as well as a wealth of easily accessible maintenance and repair information online, we hope to help parents feel a little less anxious as that son or daughter drives off to school for the first time.”

For more in-depth information and How-Tos, click here (<http://www.automd.com/About-AutoMD/Press/8-17-2010>) and/or go to www.automd.com

About AutoMD.com

AutoMD.com™ (www.automd.com), a wholly-owned subsidiary of US Auto Parts Network, Inc., (Nasdaq:PRTS), is the most comprehensive and unbiased free online auto repair resource designed to empower car owners with the best way to repair their vehicles. Backed by a team of automotive data specialists and certified auto mechanics who are advocates for the car owner, AutoMD.com allows both car owners and DIYers to 1. Diagnose car problems, 2. Know how much auto repairs should cost, 3. Understand the steps needed and the time it should take with How-to Auto Repair guides, and 4. Find the right local auto repair shop at the right price for their issue and 5. Get your auto repair questions answered by the AutoMD.com community. AutoMD.com was named Best Automotive Website in the 8th annual American Business Awards, also known as the Stevie® Awards.

Unlike other repair sites, AutoMD.com does not rely on revenue from repair shops or dealerships, so car owners can rest assured that AutoMD.com repair shop listings are completely unbiased and designed to help car owners choose the best, most affordable shop for their vehicle issue.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendriviers_factsheet.html

2 AAA Press Release

<http://www.aaanewsroom.net/main/Default.asp?CategoryID=7&ArticleID=310>

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