

# TOOLBOX TALKS

## Driving and Being Prepared

Most people wouldn't head off to an important meeting or a big presentation without being prepared. Yet every day, no matter how long or short the trip, drivers head out onto the road without ensuring that their vehicle is well-maintained and stocked with essential emergency items, their route is planned and they are physically and mentally prepared to drive. Staying safe while driving is all a matter of being "road ready."

### Road Ready Checklist

- **Plan route ahead of time.** There are many websites that provide timely information to assist drivers in planning their route. To obtain national links for traffic and road conditions, road construction projects, and up-to-date weather reports, visit: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm).
- **Ensure that vehicle is in good working order.** A small problem can turn into a big problem on the road. Stay current on all regular maintenance.
  - Fill the tank with gas
  - Check all fluids, belts, and hoses
  - Test tire pressure and tread depth, remember the spare tire
  - Check windshield wiper blades and replace if necessary
  - Check headlights, taillights and turn signals
  - Check brakes
  - Step up on the front bumper and bounce up and down to test front-end shock absorbers.
  - Check all glass and mirrors for clear visibility. Especially look for dirt, grime, cracks, or breaks.
  - Check any cargo for proper stacking and tie-down.
- **Keep vehicle stocked with essential items for an emergency.**
  - Flares
  - Battery booster cables
  - Flashlight with fresh batteries
  - Spare tire and jack
  - Vehicle owner's manual
  - Blanket
  - First aid kit
  - Drive focused without distractions.
  - Never drink alcohol and drive.



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The checklist is no substitute for maintaining a vehicle in top shape—this includes its mechanical parts. Different drivers include other checks, depending upon the kind of vehicle, weight, and bulk of loads to be hauled, as well as on driving conditions and weather. The important thing is to go through the checklist *before every trip*. It acts as a double check on vehicle maintenance and gives the operator a clear idea of future needs for maintenance and repair.

Checking before the trip can give the operator an edge on making it a safe one.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.

This safety checklist was developed in cooperation with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the Texas Department of Insurance/Division of Workers' Compensation.



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