

Prepare Your Car for an Emergency or a Trip

Before an emergency strikes, ensure your vehicle is in top condition by having a mechanic inspect all critical systems. This proactive step can make a major difference in your ability to evacuate safely or remain mobile during a disaster.

In addition to emergency preparedness, it's a good practice to inspect these systems regularly as part of routine vehicle maintenance. Regular checks help ensure your car is operating properly and reliably, allowing you to catch potential issues early, reduce the risk of unexpected breakdowns, and extend the overall lifespan of your vehicle.

Vehicle Systems to Check

- **Antifreeze levels:** Prevent engine freezing and overheating.
- **Battery and ignition system:** Ensure reliable starts during power outages or cold weather.
- **Brakes:** Critical for safety in wet, icy, or obstructed conditions.
- **Exhaust system:** Protects against harmful gas buildup, especially in enclosed areas.
- **Fuel and air filters:** Maintain engine performance during long trips or detours.
- **Full fuel tank:** Ensures maximum range and prevents fuel shortages during emergencies.
- **Heater and defroster:** Maintain visibility and warmth in cold climates.
- **Lights and hazard flashers:** Ensure visibility in poor weather or night evacuations.
- **Oil:** Keeps the engine lubricated and running smoothly. Check it regularly and replace it every 2 years or every 10,000–15,000 km (about 6,000–9,000 miles), or as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- **Thermostat:** Prevents engine from overheating or failing in extreme temperatures.
- **Windshield wiper system and washer fluid:** Essential for maintaining visibility in rain or snow.
- **Climate control system and climate liquid levels:** Ensures the cabin remains comfortable and safe.

Additional Emergency Items

Include a car emergency kit with jumper cables, blankets, food, water, and a flashlight for added safety.