

BEACH AUTO REPAIR

Virginia Beach, Virginia · Trusted since 2010

Complete Car Care Checklist Pack

Ten printable checklists written by our technicians. Last updated August 9, 2026.

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Need a hand with anything on these lists?

Book online at beachautorepairva.com/booking or call (757) 600-2095.

5564 Virginia Beach Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA · Same day appointments available.

Monthly Vehicle Health Check

A five minute walk-around that catches small problems before they turn into expensive repairs.

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UNDER THE HOOD

- ☐ Engine oil level and color
- ☐ Coolant level in the overflow tank (engine cold)
- ☐ Brake fluid level
- ☐ Power steering fluid, if equipped
- ☐ Windshield washer fluid
- ☐ Belts for cracks, glazing or fraying
- ☐ Battery terminals clean and tight
- ☐ Fresh fluid drips under the car

TIRES AND WHEELS

- ☐ Tire pressure on all four plus the spare
- ☐ Tread depth, penny test with Lincoln's head covered
- ☐ Uneven or feathered wear patterns
- ☐ Sidewall cuts, bulges or embedded objects
- ☐ Lug nuts tight, no missing caps

LIGHTS AND GLASS

- ☐ Headlights, low and high beam
- ☐ Brake lights and third brake light
- ☐ Turn signals front and rear
- ☐ Reverse lights
- ☐ Wiper blades streak free
- ☐ Windshield chips or cracks

FROM THE DRIVER SEAT

- ☐ Warning lights that stay on after start
- ☐ Parking brake holds on an incline
- ☐ Brake pedal firm, not spongy
- ☐ A/C and heat blow at full strength
- ☐ New noises, vibration or pulling

Vehicle Maintenance Log

A printable service record. Keep it in the glove box and hand it to the next owner.

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VEHICLE INFORMATION

- ☐ Year, make and model
- ☐ VIN
- ☐ License plate
- ☐ Purchase date and mileage
- ☐ Insurance policy number
- ☐ Tire size and recommended pressure

RECORD FOR EVERY SERVICE

- ☐ Date
- ☐ Odometer reading
- ☐ Service performed
- ☐ Parts and fluids used
- ☐ Shop and invoice number
- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Next service due date or mileage

INTERVALS TO TRACK

- ☐ Oil and filter change
- ☐ Tire rotation
- ☐ Air and cabin filter
- ☐ Brake service
- ☐ Coolant service
- ☐ Transmission fluid
- ☐ Spark plugs
- ☐ Timing belt, if equipped
- ☐ State inspection

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Seasonal Maintenance Checklist

What to check at each change of season in the Hampton Roads coastal climate.

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SPRING

- ☐ Wash off winter road salt including the undercarriage
- ☐ Test A/C before the first hot day
- ☐ Inspect wipers after winter use
- ☐ Check alignment after pothole season
- ☐ Rotate tires and set pressures

SUMMER

- ☐ Cooling system pressure test and coolant condition
- ☐ A/C refrigerant charge and cabin air filter
- ☐ Battery load test, heat kills batteries
- ☐ Recheck tire pressure, heat raises it
- ☐ Top off washer fluid

FALL

- ☐ Test heater and defroster
- ☐ Inspect brakes before the wet season
- ☐ Check every exterior light for shorter days
- ☐ Replace wiper blades
- ☐ Verify tread depth for rain traction

WINTER

- ☐ Battery and charging system test
- ☐ Coolant freeze point check
- ☐ Recheck tire pressure, cold lowers it
- ☐ Emergency kit stocked and in the trunk
- ☐ Rinse the car after coastal storms and salt

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Summer Heat and A/C Readiness

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Get the cooling and A/C systems ready before Virginia Beach humidity arrives.

AIR CONDITIONING

- ☐ Vent temperature at least 35 degrees below ambient
- ☐ Compressor engages and cycles normally
- ☐ Cabin air filter clean
- ☐ No oily residue at fittings, a sign of refrigerant leaks
- ☐ Blower works on every fan speed
- ☐ Condenser fins clear of bugs and debris

COOLING SYSTEM

- ☐ Coolant level and condition
- ☐ Radiator cap holds pressure
- ☐ Radiator and condenser fans run
- ☐ Hoses firm, not spongy or swollen
- ☐ No white crust at joints or the water pump weep hole
- ☐ Thermostat holds normal operating temperature

HEAT RELATED WEAR

- ☐ Battery load test and clean terminals
- ☐ Serpentine belt condition
- ☐ Tire pressure set cold
- ☐ Wiper blades not baked or cracked
- ☐ Fluids topped for long summer drives

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Winter Weather Prep

Cold snaps, coastal storms and salted roads all put extra load on your vehicle.

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STARTING AND CHARGING

- ☐ Battery load test, most fail in the first cold morning
- ☐ Terminals cleaned and protected
- ☐ Alternator output verified
- ☐ Starter cranks quickly, no slow roll

TRACTION AND VISIBILITY

- ☐ Tread depth of at least 4/32 inch
- ☐ Tire pressure set cold, it drops with temperature
- ☐ Winter rated wiper blades
- ☐ Washer fluid rated for freezing
- ☐ Defroster and rear defogger both work
- ☐ All lights clear and aimed

HEAT AND PROTECTION

- ☐ Heater output strong at idle
- ☐ Coolant freeze protection tested
- ☐ Cabin air filter replaced
- ☐ Undercarriage rinsed after salted roads
- ☐ Door and trunk seals treated so they do not freeze shut

IN THE TRUNK

- ☐ Blanket, gloves and a hat
- ☐ Flashlight with fresh batteries
- ☐ Ice scraper and small snow brush
- ☐ Jumper cables or a jump pack
- ☐ Sand or cat litter for traction

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Road Trip Pre-Departure Checklist

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Run this list one week before a long drive so there is time to fix anything you find.

ONE WEEK OUT

- ☐ Oil change if you will pass the interval during the trip
- ☐ Tire rotation and alignment check
- ☐ Brake inspection front and rear
- ☐ Battery and charging system test
- ☐ All fluids topped off
- ☐ Air and cabin filters checked

DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Set tire pressure cold, including the spare
- ☐ Verify the jack and lug wrench are present
- ☐ Wipers and washer fluid
- ☐ Test every exterior light
- ☐ Clean glass inside and out
- ☐ Fuel up and reset the trip meter

PACK FOR THE ROAD

- ☐ Registration and insurance card
- ☐ Roadside assistance number
- ☐ Jumper cables or jump pack
- ☐ Tire inflator or sealant
- ☐ Basic tool kit and work gloves
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Water and non-perishable snacks
- ☐ Phone charger and backup battery

ON THE ROAD

- ☐ Recheck tire pressure every fuel stop
- ☐ Watch temperature and oil pressure gauges
- ☐ Note any new noise, pull or vibration early
- ☐ Rest stop walk-around every few hours

Used Car Pre-Purchase Inspection Checklist

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Bring this to any private sale or dealership before you sign anything.

PAPERWORK

- ☐ Title in the seller's name and free of liens
- ☐ VIN on the dash matches title and door jamb
- ☐ Vehicle history report reviewed
- ☐ Service records available
- ☐ Open recalls checked by VIN

EXTERIOR

- ☐ Panel gaps even and paint shade consistent
- ☐ Overspray on trim or weatherstripping
- ☐ Rust in wheel wells, rockers and under doors
- ☐ Glass free of cracks, all markings match
- ☐ Tires matched brand with even wear
- ☐ Lights all working and lenses not fogged

INTERIOR

- ☐ Musty or damp smell, a flood warning sign
- ☐ Carpet and spare tire well dry
- ☐ All electronics, windows and locks work
- ☐ Seat belts retract cleanly
- ☐ Warning lights extinguish after start
- ☐ A/C and heat both strong

MECHANICAL AND TEST DRIVE

- ☐ Cold start, listen for knock or rattle
- ☐ No blue or white smoke from the exhaust
- ☐ Steering tracks straight with hands relaxed
- ☐ Brakes stop straight with no pulsation
- ☐ Transmission shifts smoothly, no flare or clunk
- ☐ Highway speed test for vibration
- ☐ Professional pre-purchase inspection before purchase

Virginia State Inspection Prep

Common reasons vehicles fail the Virginia safety inspection, and how to check first.

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LIGHTS

- ☐ Headlights both beams, aim not obviously off
- ☐ Tail lights and brake lights
- ☐ Turn signals and hazard flashers
- ☐ License plate light
- ☐ Reverse lights
- ☐ No cracked or missing lenses

BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

- ☐ Pad thickness within limits
- ☐ No brake fluid leaks
- ☐ Parking brake holds
- ☐ No excessive play in steering
- ☐ Shocks and struts not leaking

TIRES AND GLASS

- ☐ Tread depth at least 2/32 inch
- ☐ No cord showing, bulges or plugs in the sidewall
- ☐ Windshield free of cracks in the wiper path
- ☐ Wipers clear the glass without streaking
- ☐ Mirrors present and not cracked

OTHER COMMON FAILURES

- ☐ Horn works
- ☐ Seat belts function and are not frayed
- ☐ Exhaust with no leaks or excessive noise
- ☐ Doors open and latch from inside and out
- ☐ Window tint within Virginia limits
- ☐ Fuel system with no leaks or missing cap

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Emergency Kit and Breakdown Steps

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What to carry, and exactly what to do when a vehicle quits on the road.

IF YOU BREAK DOWN

- ☐ Signal early and move right toward the shoulder
- ☐ Hazard lights on as soon as trouble starts
- ☐ Get as far off the travel lane as possible
- ☐ Stay belted inside if traffic is fast or heavy
- ☐ Exit on the passenger side when it is safe
- ☐ Set reflective triangles well behind the car
- ☐ Call for a tow, then call the shop

CORE KIT

- ☐ Jumper cables or a lithium jump pack
- ☐ Tire inflator and pressure gauge
- ☐ Reflective triangles or flares
- ☐ LED flashlight and spare batteries
- ☐ Work gloves and shop towels
- ☐ Multi tool and basic sockets
- ☐ Duct tape and zip ties

COMFORT AND SAFETY

- ☐ Bottled water and non-perishable snacks
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Blanket and rain poncho
- ☐ Phone charger and backup battery
- ☐ Printed copy of insurance and roadside numbers

KNOW BEFORE YOU NEED IT

- ☐ Where your spare, jack and lug key live
- ☐ Whether your car has a spare at all
- ☐ Your roadside assistance coverage
- ☐ Your preferred shop's number saved in your phone

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Flood and Storm Damage Checklist

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Coastal flooding and heavy storms cause damage that is easy to miss. Do not start the engine first.

DO THIS FIRST

- ☐ Do not attempt to start the engine
- ☐ Note the visible water line inside and out
- ☐ Photograph everything for your insurer
- ☐ Disconnect the negative battery cable if it is safe
- ☐ Call for a flatbed tow, not a wheel lift
- ☐ Contact your insurance company before repairs

SIGNS OF WATER INTRUSION

- ☐ Damp or stained carpet and padding
- ☐ Water in the spare tire well
- ☐ Silt or mud under the seats and in the trunk
- ☐ Musty odor or fogged interior glass
- ☐ Moisture inside light housings
- ☐ Rust on unpainted metal under the dash

WHAT NEEDS PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION

- ☐ Engine oil and transmission fluid checked for water
- ☐ All electrical modules and connectors
- ☐ Wiring harness corrosion
- ☐ Brake and fuel system contamination
- ☐ Wheel bearings and differentials
- ☐ Interior removal for full drying

AFTER THE REPAIR

- ☐ Recheck electronics over the following weeks
- ☐ Watch for new warning lights
- ☐ Note any recurring odor
- ☐ Keep all documentation for resale disclosure

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