Spring and summer check over by Hiteshbhoi

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It is that time of the year, spring will be here soon, following that, "hot summer days" (I hope)

Anyway it will be time to get our cars and trucks ready for spring and summer:

Under the hood

Engine oil, I suggest that you change both the oil and filter,

Coolant (level, colour and strength) Do Not run with only water, and keep the antifreeze at -45 C or -50 F

Air condition, check it out now, don't wait until summer when it is hot out, (your wife and kids won't be very happy if it does not work)

Transmission, Is it due for a Transmission service? How does the oil smell? Is the colour nice and red? How does it perform? (slippage, hesitation, bump, slow engaging) Is the level within limits? Do you see any leaks?

Power steering, again check the level, smell and leaks.

Belts and hoses, check for cracks and/or frayed hoses, check hoseclamps and if there are spring type clamps, give them a close look (I have seen them break in half, and the radhose came off) You can guess what was next!

Battery and Cables, keep the clamps clean and tight, check the battery charge, charging system.

Sparkplugs, when was the last tune-up? Some engines have "long life" plugs in them, but if you have 60,000 km or miles on your vehicle, pull one or two plugs to see what they look like. Check the plugwires (Corroded, Oil soaked, cracked) replace them, it might be that you go up a long hill, you find that the engine is bucking (could be just one or two wires)

Airfilter, I think that the filter is the most forgotten item under the hood. Can you see light through it when you hold it up to a lamp (lamp on, of course, LOL) I have seen some pretty dirty one where no air can pass through, if the engine does not get enough air, it just works harder to get air and uses more fuel, at today's price of fuel.....well, you fill in the blank. You can clean the filter by tapping it against a wall, check it again, replace if needed.

Windshield washer fluids, what I do is from now on I start adding the summer washer fluid, you know the pink stuff (the bug remover fluid). If the container is clean just add to it, that way you'll still have some antifreeze washer fluid (just in case it still get cold).

Under the vehicle

Exhaust system, check for leaks, damage, rusting muffler, etc.(remember exhaust fumes can kill)

Steering, check all steering parts for looseness, (remember that pothole you hit?)

Suspension, check ball joints, struts, springs, shocks. (all these parts can make your vehicle act like

a donkey on a narrow path) (can you picture this?) All kidding aside, failure in any of these parts can make you loose control over your vehicle!

Ride height, look for low hanging parts, i.e.. low exhaust system, brake/fuel lines, wire harness, etc.

Engine/transmission mounts, Swaybar, check all bushings for cracks or wear.

Outside of vehicle,

Wipers, replace those winter wiperblades, if last years blades are still good, use them. (same with the winter blades, if still good, keep them until next fall)

All lights, check all bulbs, replace those that are out. (the most forgotten light is the centre brakelight and licenseplate bulbs) Check also for headlight beam height, fog and driving light included. (we have all had a vehicle coming towards us with high adjusted lights)

Tires, Off with those studded tires, (most states or provinces have a law against studded tires at a certain date) Remember AWD's and 4WD.....Same size tires all around (I recommend: same size, same brand!)

Tire pressures, as shown on the drivers door or in your owners handbook.

Inside the vehicle.

Brakes, how does the brake pedal feel? If the pedal is spongy or the brakes don't work as good as they should, you may have air in the system and/or the brake rotors/drums, pads/shoes are worn. (remember, poor brakes makes for a slow stopping vehicle.....whoooo there Nellie)

Brake and warning lights, (bulb check on the dashboard) these should come on for a few seconds when you first start the engine, if all OK go off and stay off.

General, I think we all know that a clean vehicle runs and rides better, so give baby a nice warm bath and slap a good coat of carpolish on her and she'll hum like a happy bee.

Happy and safe Motoring.

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