

Tech Article - September 2009

A lot of you are getting ready for the fall tour, is your car ready and are you? Do you have the tools and few spare parts you need? It is not necessary that you carry a complete car as a spare but there are some things you should carry. And everyone need not carry the same things. I liked to carry a spare electric fuel pump, points & condensor, rotor, fan belt, accelerator cable, and duct tape. Not that it a permanent fix for anything, it just makes you feel prepared.

You really do not need an alternator, starter, distributor, etc. unless you really do not trust your car. I have never carried any of these items and have always driven my car back home. Make sure your car is ready for the trip before hand and you will not need so much stuff. Plus, if one person is carrying a spare fuel pump, you can carry the spare tune up parts. Get together before the drive and divide up the spare parts and everyone carry something.

What would the chances be of more than one needing an alternator or distributor? I bet it would be pretty low. As to tools, I have discussed what I would carry before and what I would carry is excessive of what you should carry, unless I am not along on the drive. I carried enough tools to build a trans on the side of the road, but not the parts. I could replace any wheel bearings, tune up parts, head gaskets, etc. I carried enough tools so I could repair almost anything that might break while hundreds of miles from home on a variety of cars.

You need not do that. If you do not have the ability to repair something, no need to burden your car with extra weight of tools. And that will give you more room for shopping. Have your car checked out before you leave and that will be the best form of preparation you can make.

Now here is a little tip for when you want to work on your electrical system. It is similar to household systems in that you need to turn off the circuit breaker, or remove the fuse, before changing out a ceiling fan. Disconnect your battery before pulling something apart. That will eliminate the possibility of burning a wiring harness. If, when you go to reconnect your battery, you see a spark, that means a short. Find it first. It may just be the door light but check it out before bolting on the terminal. If there is a spark when you just barely tap either terminal to the battery; assuming the other is still attached, then something is grounding. Disconnect the bottom fuse, brown and purple wires to it, and try again. This should eliminate the spark. As the ignition key should be off, and the lights are not on, there should be no spark when you tap the terminal with the battery wire. If there still is, find out what you have to do to stop it before finishing the job, It may be the clock or radio memory or it might be something bigger. Re-check what you just did to be sure it is connected correctly.

Another small tip, inflate your tires to about 32 lbs. each before the trip and do it when the tires are cold. This will help with the performance of the car a little bit. If

you can jack each wheel up, place the edge of a box as close to the tire tread as you can and turn the wheel. If it hits in only one spot, the tire is out of round. You will be able to feel less than 1/4" out of round in the steering wheel and/or in your butt. Have it trued before your trip. Out of round can lead to worn shocks and suspension bushings.

Put your car in first and let the clutch out, not while aimed at your garage wall, then do it in reverse. If you hear a lot of popping, check the play in the differential and the tightness of your wheels if they are wires. Please make sure your knock-offs are as tight as you can get them. And do not forget to check your spare tire.

See yall soon, somewhere. Barry