

How to get your vehicle road-trip ready for a unique 2020 holiday

By [Filum Ho](#)

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Many South Africans are itching to hit the wide-open roads for the upcoming holiday season after months of difficult lockdowns. And with many local airlines not operating fully, there's a good chance a wider array of South Africans will embark on road trips this December than usual. This means that holiday-goers will need to take a closer look at whether their vehicles are fully ready to hit the road.



Filum Ho | image supplied

With many local airlines not operating fully, and the importance of social distancing still a top priority, it could be the case that a wider array of South Africans will embark on road trips this December than normal.

And when considering that most people's cars have been parked longer in the garage in 2020 than in previous years, holidaymakers will also have to take a closer look at whether their vehicles are fully ready to hit the road.

More than ever, it's important to inspect the state of your windscreens and elements in contact with the road - like suspension, steering and brakes.

Windscreen wipers

With above-average rainfall forecast for South Africa until January 2021, you'll need to ensure that your windscreen wipers are in good working order to ensure you have good visibility at all times.

Take a look at the state of the rubber on your wipers as well as the wiper fittings

Telltale signs for potential problems include any vibrating, squeaking or streaking noises. These indicate damage to the rubber band, which can be caused by a range of factors like overuse, oil, dirt and even just ageing.

Auto glass

Over time, small stones or cracks may have occurred along the surface of your windscreen. With your car parked longer in the garage this year, you may not have fully noticed these either.

A cracked windscreen is not only a hindrance to your ability to see what's going on around you, but it can also become a danger to you during front-end collisions or rollovers. This is because a windshield forms part of the structure that holds your car together.

Your windscreen is also critical to providing support to your airbag. If necessary, ensure that you carry out repairs to your glass before it becomes a bigger problem.

Suspension

The suspension on a vehicle relates to shock absorbers, and when these are worn, your tyres can start bouncing along the road while driving.

When a wheel is bouncing, there's no positive contact to the road surface. As a result, your braking and stability are affected, especially in wet weather conditions and during emergency stops.

The risk here is that your vehicle may go into an uncontrollable slide.

Control arms, lateral links

Any issues with your car's control arms or lateral links will mean that you don't have adequate control.

This can be especially dangerous when it comes to harsh braking in wet conditions or where there is lots of sand or pebbles.

It's critical to ensure that these are in full working condition.

Braking system and tyres

Lastly, it's imperative that your car is able to stay on the road surface with tyres that are in good condition and a fully functioning braking system.

When it comes to tyres, check that your tread is the right depth - the law states this needs to be at least 1.6mm. Also, be sure to check for any radial cracks as these could cause blowouts while driving.

Further to this, make sure you have a fully functioning braking system that includes sufficient brake pad thickness, and brake discs that are not adversely worn. This latter issue, in particular, can cause brake fade which is when the brakes overheat so much that they become ineffective.

If you take care of these key aspects of your vehicle, then you can substantially reduce your risk on the roads over this holiday period.

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