



Safety: Inspection



Description: Safety inspections consist of a series of safety-related checks for various systems and areas of the vehicle. For example, some common checks include glass, horn, tires, wipers, lights, turn signals, brakes, mirrors, steering, suspension, and restraint systems. States may opt for different systems and subsystems at their discretion. At present, there are 19 states/areas of the country that require safety inspections. Most states have programs that require inspections on an annual basis, but there are some areas that only require inspections on a biennial (two-year) basis.

Purpose: State agencies often adopt safety inspections as a means of regulating improved safety for motorists. Research shows that states with annual safety inspection programs have accident rates that are 20 percent lower than in states without safety inspections. Safety inspections represent a good opportunity have minor problems corrected before they become major problems or hazards.

Maintenance Tips/Suggestions: If you live in an area that requires a safety inspection, welcome it as an opportunity to have your car looked over thoroughly. There's more at stake here than just safety; an inspection can also detect problems that could cause major breakdown headaches in the near future. Plan your inspection into your schedule at a time when the inspection facility isn't backed up with other work. This often happens at the end of the month when everyone suddenly rushes at the last minute to schedule an inspection. Planning ahead gives you time to make better choices about different repairs or services that may be needed as determined during the inspection.