

The Preventive Maintenance Series

Mike Dawson

The following list of items to check before taking a trip are suggestions for all Corvairs in general. Remember that even long trips are usually less than the mileage between a single oil change. Serviced properly, your Corvair will cruise to all of this summer's events and back - and be happier for it!

1. Check or clean & pack all four wheel bearing assemblies, and check & lube the 2 or 4 U-joints. Check front end parts and lube the fittings.
2. Have tires balanced and aligned if necessary. Before trips, check all five tire pressures and tighten lug nuts with the tool you use to change a tire.
3. Check or change all fluids: oil, transmission, differential, brake fluid, washer fluid and battery level if possible. Synthetic Powerglide fluid is a very good idea.
4. Check the oil pressure sending unit and change this inexpensive item if you do not know its history.
5. Check the engine tune, and include cleaning the crankcase vents. Check the breaker plate in the distributor, lube the distributor cam and inspect the electrical connections such as the primary coil wires, alternator wires (no generators allowed) and multi-connectors. Check carburetor inlet nuts for leaks.
6. Check the battery date, cable ends, ground cable mount and check the overall charging system with the lights and accessories on maximum.
7. REMOVE the belt and check the condition of the entire length. Spin all three pulleys and lube anything questionable. Tools are available to grease the fan and idler bearing.
8. Check all running lights, check the fuse block for rust, check the large connector in early model engine compartments, check warning light operation.
9. If air conditioned, blow out the condenser, check the mounts and belt, check the evaporator drain, and remove the lower shrouds for better cooling.
10. Check the harmonic balancer, and if it is original, replace it! Be sure to check the fuel pump mount, they can work loose. To be safe with the increasing ethanol additions, you should have a new Airtex pump.
11. Lube your late clutch cable ball and look for frayed cable between the two pulleys under the dash on early models – also check parking cables in the same area..
12. Check brakes; wheel cylinders, shoes, master cylinder (push rod leak), and most important, the steel and rubber lines. Give your car the “stomp test” in the driveway. Steel lines above the gas tank and next to the transaxle are the most prone to rust, with tunnel lines next.
13. Be aware of any speedometer error you may have and know your oil consumption rate. Test drive 15 minutes on the highway on a hot day, pack up and head out!

Spares and tools? My favorites would be a belt, a new fuel pump, one rocker arm with pushrod and valve cover gasket, one 30 amp fuse, a set of points and condenser, oil as required, tools for these items, and a CORSA Travel Roster.