

TECHNICAL

WHEELING PREP CHECK LIST

BY Fred Williams PHOTOGRAPHY FRED WILLIAMS

CHECK IT —TWICE

My dad always made lists of stuff when I was growing up on the farm. Mostly lists of chores for me, but also lists of parts needed, broken stuff that should be fixed, cows that were missing, and when to grease the tractors. I dreaded those lists 'cause they severely cut into my spare time goofing off, but now that I'm starting to forget stuff, I'm finding the value of the list, and have been making one recently that should be really useful for your next wheeling trip.

When you get off the Interstate and start creeping down the backroads, you need to be ready for anything. You never know when a three-hour tour can turn into a "stranded in the woods with a busted rig, under-cloudy skies, with a long hike from anywhere" type of dilemma. In such a situation it is most important to stay calm, and the security of having a few supplies on hand can help tremendously in keeping your heart rate down, and the question of "How am I gonna get out of this mess?" at bay. So here is a basic 4x4 checklist. Things to inspect before you hit the road; things to bring along, whether going for a weekend or for an hour; and things that sometimes slip your mind when you are too excited to get to the dirt. Here's a hint—when you are loading up the truck, have your wife, kid, dog, or neighbor check off everything on the list as it goes in the truck.

When properly prepared, and traveling with a come-what-may attitude, you should be able to get through almost any obstacle that should arise. Remember that the longer you plan on being out there, the more stuff you should probably bring. Doing a 20-minute competition course means making sure you

have fuel. Traveling from the tip of South America to the Arctic Circle means bringing everything on this list

and then some.



CHECK IT TWICE

B-4 U GO

Check these items so you may avoid making some repairs in the rocks or mud:

- Engine oil
- Transmission fluid
- Brake fluid
- Hydraulic-clutch fluid
- Transfer-case oil
- Differential oil
- Power-steering fluid
- Belts
- Grease all driveshafts, U-joints, and steering joints
- All lights and turn signals
- Windshield-washer fluid (helps clean off mud)
- Radiator coolant level
- Tire pressure and look for leaks or gashes
- Tow hooks (front and rear) of your vehicle
- Tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back
- Check for loose parts: Lug nuts, driveshafts, engine and tranny mounts, suspension joints, and U-bolts.

BARE NECESSITIES

Bring this stuff and some ingenuity and you will get out of many trail mishaps:

- A buddy with either a history in long-distance running to go get help, or his own 4x4
- Duct tape (fixes everything)
- Baling wire (prehistoric duct tape)
- Zip-ties (modern-day duct tape)
- WD-40 (spraying under the distributor helps start trucks that have splashed through water)
- Ratchet strap (reseal tires, helps strap parts in place)
- Tow strap (useful if you get stuck or need to be drug home)
- Leatherman type utility tool and/or Swiss army pocketknife
- Piece of 1/2-inch-or-larger chain 4-feet long (good for fixing suspension and motor mounts)
- Warm jacket (being cold makes being stuck and broke worse)
- First aid kit (loss of blood makes trail repairs challenging)
- Jug of water
- Granola bar or candy bar (food is important to survival, helps you think straight)
- Fire extinguisher (our friend watched his truck burn to the ground and then walked home)
- Flashlight (hard to walk home in the dark without one after your truck burns to the ground)
- Matches/lighter

WHAT WE ALWAYS BRING

If we're going wheeling for the day, this is a good list of tools and stuff to bring:

- Tool bag containing:
- Screwdrivers (3 different sizes)
- Pliers (Dikes, needle-nose, channel locks, snap

- Hammer (ball-peen)
- Wrenches (standard and metric—we bring both, you decide what you need)
- Adjustable wrench
- Sockets (standard and Metric—we bring them, but often wrenches are enough)
- Spark plug socket
- Pick tools (handy for fixing hubs)
- Test light
- Prybar
- Jack of some sort (High-Lift, bottle, or floor—depending on the terrain and size vehicle you own)
- Tire repair kit
- Electrical tape
- Allen wrenches
- Hacksaw

PERSONAL STUFF

These items will make the trip more enjoyable:

- Toilet paper
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Food and water (no, beer doesn't qualify as water)
- Extra jacket
- Rags/towels



SPARE PARTS

These parts start adding weight, but it's better than the long walk home:

- Tie-rod end or Heim joints (spherical rod ends) for steering
- Heim joints for your custom linked suspension
- Engine belts
- Front axleshafts
- Rear axleshafts
- Front axle U-joints
- Driveshaft U-Joints
- Spare tire
- Spare locking hub or set of drive flanges
- Spare bolts of commons sizes found on your truck
- Fuses for your truck (some fuse panels have spaces to store spares)
- Radiator hose
- Hose clamps
- Electrical crimp kit
- Valve cores

LUBES

Different goo to help you go:

- Oil
- Power-steering fluid
- Brake fluid
- Automatic-transmission fluid
- Gasoline or diesel
- Form-a-gasket or RTV silicone to reseal gaskets
- Water
- Gear oil
- WD-40

CAMPING GEAR

Basic stuff for staying in the dirt:

- Warm clothing and rain gear
- Tent or good tarp
- Camping stove and fuel
- Sleeping bag and pad
- Cooler

BONUS STUFF THAT WE LIKE HAVING ALONG

Many of you get along without these, but they are very useful, especially if you need to do extreme trail repairs:

- Air compressor or CO² tank
- Impact gun and impact sockets
- Underhood welder

GET OUT OF A STUCK SITUATION STUFF

Bring more of these the longer and farther from civilization you are going:

- Winch
- Winch control
- Shackle or two
- Spare cable (especially if you see yourself doing really long winch pulls)
- Chain (Grade 70)
- Snatch block
- High-Lift type jack
- Pull-Pal recovery anchor
- Shovel
- Ax
- Tree protector
- Snatch strap
- Gloves
- Winch bag (something to put over the cable or rope to keep it under control should it snap)

NAVIGATION

If you don't like asking for directions:

- Maps
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Compass
- Citizens Band radio
- Cell phone
- Gas station guy, so your wife can ask directions when you won't ☹️