

The summer holiday season is about to start and with decreasing Covid-19 restrictions many people are starting to plan their holiday by car. This usually means the vehicle will be used differently than in everyday life: it might be overpacked, hauling, driven more kilometers etc. All these additional conditions cause extra strain on the car's engine, brakes, driveline, and suspension.

The passengers and their driver want to enjoy a pleasant, trouble-free journey and a relaxing holiday at their destination without having to worry about the car's reliability or a breakdown along the way. Thus, many workshops offer an attractive "Holiday Check" which involves checking the car's brake system, fluids, tires, wiper blades, battery condition...AND the air suspension system.



Considering the past and still pending restrictions in movement caused by the Covid-19 crisis, a Holiday check is more important than ever. During the partial or hard lockdowns, many vehicles have not been driven as often as usual.

Given this, have you wondered what consequences this could have for the air suspension system? Most people travelling to their holiday destination carry bigger loads in their vehicles and usually drive longer distances. These factors challenge the suspension system's road handling and ride comfort, making the flawless functioning of the system even more important. Vehicles equipped with air suspension conveniently level the car under all circumstances, including with heavy loads and towing.

Let's take a closer look to find out how this works:

Air suspension systems use a compressor to inflate the air springs. Height sensors give the ECU (Electronic Control Unit) a signal when the vehicle is not at a predetermined height. The compressor then pumps air into the air springs until the proper height is reached. The system does this after loading while still stationary, but also continuously while driving, cornering, during road inputs, etc.



Air springs are wear and tear parts, eventually the rubber will dry out and small cracks start to occur at the vulnerable areas. On average, an air suspension part will need to be replaced in six to ten years. Mileage, climate, driving conditions and off-road usage will also influence the replacement rate.

Quick diagnosis of a leaking air spring is easy. If the car is parked overnight and the next morning one corner is sitting lower than normal, the system has a leak. Despite this, a small existing leak may go unnoticed by the driver. A simple leak detection method using a water and soap solution prevents that your customer gets stranded with a non-detected air leak.

Remember that even with a small leak a compressor is still able to maintain adequate pressure. But, as the leak gets bigger over time, the compressor will overheat (or burn-out) in its attempt to reach the required pressure and ride height. This causes irreversible damage to the compressor. The extra load of the holiday luggage and/or winding roads in the mountains will create even more stress, making it absolutely crucial to have the whole system checked before starting the journey!

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