

# Record Road Trips and Aging Cars Raise Summer Breakdown Risks, JustAnswer Data Shows

*Analysis of 222,000+ auto questions shows battery, check-engine, AC and cooling issues are top concerns as drivers prepare for peak summer travel*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As millions of



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*JustAnswer Auto Expert Chris Pyle*

Americans prepare for summer vacations and road trips, new data from [JustAnswer](#), the platform that connects people with verified mechanics and automotive experts for on-demand help, reveals a sharp seasonal increase in vehicle repair and maintenance questions and highlights the most common issues threatening to derail summer travel plans.

According to an analysis of more than 222,000 car-related questions submitted to JustAnswer in 2025 and through May 2026, automotive questions consistently surge during the spring and summer months as Americans prepare for vacations, road trips and increased seasonal driving. July

was the busiest month of the year for car questions, with JustAnswer's automotive experts answering more than 9,100 vehicle-related questions. The trend is continuing in 2026, with approximately 71,000 car questions already submitted to the platform year to date.

The findings come as Americans continue to hit the road in high numbers despite pressure on household travel budgets. [AAA](#) reported that approximately 45 million people traveled over Memorial Day weekend, including more than 39 million by car, while Fourth of July has historically drawn even larger volumes of domestic travelers. As more drivers prepare older vehicles for peak summer travel, JustAnswer's data highlights the car problems most likely to derail road trips and add unexpected repair costs.

At the same time, Americans are keeping their vehicles longer than ever, making preventive maintenance more important. According to [S&P Global Mobility](#), the average age of vehicles on U.S. roads reached a record 12.8 years in 2025, continuing a years-long trend toward longer vehicle ownership.

"Every summer we see a significant jump in questions from drivers trying to diagnose problems before a trip or dealing with issues that emerge during hot weather and heavy travel," said Chris Pyle, top automotive expert on JustAnswer. "Many of the most common summer breakdowns are preventable if drivers know what to look for ahead of time."

## The Top Summer Car Problems Americans Ask About on JustAnswer

An analysis of summer 2025 automotive conversations on JustAnswer found that the most common concerns were:

1. Battery issues
2. Check engine lights
3. Towing and roadside breakdowns
4. Air conditioning compressor and cooling problems
5. Brake-related concerns

## Summer Heat Drives Specific Vehicle Problems

The data shows that not all vehicle problems rise equally during the summer months. While battery-related concerns generated the highest overall volume of conversations, accounting for approximately 11,500 questions during summer 2025, air conditioning and cooling system issues experienced the sharpest seasonal increase.

Questions related to air conditioning compressors and cooling systems increased 178% between January and July, reflecting the strain that rising temperatures place on vehicle systems and the growing importance of reliable cooling during summer travel.

"People tend to focus on their tires before a road trip, but summer heat puts enormous stress on batteries, cooling systems and air conditioning components," said Pyle. "Those are often the issues that leave drivers stranded on the side of the road or miserable during a long drive."

The findings suggest that while Americans may be preparing their vehicles for summer travel, many are discovering maintenance issues only after temperatures begin to climb.

## Which Vehicles Generate the Most Questions?

American vehicle brands account for approximately 40% of all automotive questions submitted to JustAnswer. The brands and vehicle types generating the most questions in 2026 year-to-date are:

1. Ford
2. Chevrolet
3. RVs

4. Toyota
5. Dodge

While the top rankings have remained largely consistent, several vehicle categories have seen notable growth in question volume over the past two years:

- Lexus rose from No. 26 to No. 18
- Hyundai rose from No. 16 to No. 12
- EV-related questions rose from No. 19 to No. 14
- Audi rose from No. 27 to No. 23

### JustAnswer Auto Expert Chris Pyle's Top Three Summer Car Maintenance Tips

To help drivers avoid costly repairs and roadside breakdowns this summer, Pyle recommends focusing on three key areas:

#### 1. Get Your Battery Tested

"Most people associate battery failures with winter, but summer heat is what causes much of the damage," said Pyle. "I recommend having your battery tested at least three times per year to monitor its health and avoid unexpected failures."

#### 2. Check Your Air Conditioning Performance

Before temperatures peak, drivers should verify that cold air is flowing properly from their vents. Weak cooling performance may indicate a refrigerant leak or other developing issue that should be addressed before a long trip.

#### 3. Inspect Your Cooling System

Summer heat places additional stress on vehicle cooling systems. Drivers should ensure coolant levels are correct and have the water pump, thermostat and cooling system inspected for leaks or signs of wear.

### Common Auto Maintenance Myths That Cost Drivers Money

Based on thousands of conversations with vehicle owners, Pyle says several persistent misconceptions lead consumers to spend money unnecessarily:

- Replacing oil strictly by date rather than mileage
- Paying for premium fuel when the owner's manual doesn't require it
- Replacing air filters based solely on mileage instead of inspection
- Failing to keep maintenance records
- Replacing brake pads earlier than necessary

"One of the biggest mistakes drivers make is losing track of what maintenance has already been performed," said Pyle. "Good records help consumers make informed decisions and avoid paying for repairs before they're actually needed."

For more “Summer Roadtrip-Ready” car maintenance advice from JustAnswer auto experts, please visit: <https://www.justanswer.com/blog/summer-road-trip-prep-auto-expert-shares-8-car-maintenance-tips-could-save-you-thousands> or <https://www.justanswer.com/blog/summer-road-trip-checklist>.

## About JustAnswer

JustAnswer is a paid online platform that connects people with verified human experts for professional help across automotive, legal, medical, veterinary, home improvement, technology, and other categories. Available 24/7, JustAnswer gives people fast access to real experts when they need answers - without appointments, long wait times, or scheduling hassles. Since 2003, millions of customers have turned to JustAnswer for trusted guidance from more than 20,000 verified and licensed professionals. Learn more at [www.justanswer.com/info/how-it-works](http://www.justanswer.com/info/how-it-works).

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