

VEHICLE TIPS AND TRICKS

The information contained on this sheet is a guide to help put your car on, and keep it on, the Great Escape track. The tips and ideas are mostly those from entrants and officials that have learnt the hard way over the years. There is a lot of information here, and you are not expected to rush out and ensure all this is done to your car. However, you will no doubt find some very helpful advice to get yourself started for this year's rally, and hopefully have a good view of basic preparations for future Great Escapes.

COMPULSORY VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

To begin with, here is the list from the official rules. The items listed below, are everything that your car **MUST** have:

- A Speedo or tripmeter that reads to at least one tenth of a kilometre
- Fire Extinguisher. Easily accessible and firmly mounted. Must be of adequate size and tagged.
- 10 Litres of drinking water
- A Snatchem strap. (NOT a tow rope or chain)
- Mud Flaps of stout material for each driving wheel. (Mud flaps must be at least 100mm off ground when vehicle is fully loaded)
- 20 Litre legal fuel container. Must be full at the beginning of each day
- UHF radio. Fitted and in good working order
- An orange rotating light on the roof of the vehicle for use in dusty conditions. Must be unobstructed and easily visible from the front & rear
- Sleeping gear for each crew member
- Seat belts must be fitted to the vehicle for each crew member and worn at all times. Full harness seat belts are recommended
- A securely mounted and clearly marked front and rear towing point (for recovery out of bogs etc..)
- A centrally mounted tow ball for the front of the vehicle. The tow ball should be unbolted and stored in the boot. This is for stiff bar towing should you break down.

- Rear facing car number, at least 4 inches high. Black on white or white on black. Must be on the right hand side and easily visible
- Forward facing car number. White numbers on the passenger side of the windscreen
- A space at least 650mm x 450mm must be kept clear on each front door or an area approved by the organisers, for the official door signs
- A HEMA Australian Road Atlas
- At least a 4 point roll cage is strongly recommended
- As per State laws, an engineer's certificate (modification plate for QLD) must be obtained for any major modifications made to the vehicle eg roll cage, seats and seat belts. For more information, contact your nearest Motor Registry office or Department of Transport
- If your vehicle does not comply with all of the above equipment, IT WILL BE ENFORCED THAT YOU MUST ONLY FOLLOW MAIN ROADS. (This rule will be strictly adhered to by the organisers without exception).

SCRUTINEERING AND VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

It is the total responsibility of the principle entrant and vehicle owner to ensure that the vehicle is presented at the start of the rally in a legally road registered and road worthy state. It is also their responsibility to ensure it remains in a safe and road worthy condition throughout the event.

At the start of the event, you must:

- Bring a current and valid road worthy certificate (pink slip) or a letter from a registered mechanic stating that in their opinion the vehicle is road worthy and safe
- Current vehicle registration papers
- The vehicle with all compulsory equipment as stated in the official rules

ROLL CAGES, FUEL TANK, SEATS, SEAT BELTS, MODIFICATIONS

This is probably the most difficult part of your vehicle preparations. It can be a real hair-tearer if you approach it all wrong. However if you make the right steps first up, it wont be too difficult.

1. Once you have your car and a basic plan what you would like to modify on it, locate yourself an engineer that is certified to approve these modifications. A list of authorised businesses in your area can be obtained through your local Motor Registry Office or Department of Transport. If you are fortunate enough to have a few of these people in your town, make sure you find one that can relate to you and your needs. Some are very understanding of the vehicles requirements and will be helpful while others couldn't give a hoot and will make your life difficult.
2. Once you have found the best person to talk to, you can then proceed through to make your modifications then onto getting them approved and certified
3. The Motor Registry Office or Department of Transport, or your chosen approver, can supply you with the steel and mounting specifications and drawings etc

TOW POINTS AND TOWING:

As The Great Escape is an adventure and travels into some very interesting country, it is not uncommon to come across a dry sandy creek bed or a bog hole or two. To keep you safe and on the move, we will station a recovery vehicle in these known trouble spots.

Recovering a vehicle with a snatchem strap is quick and easy, but can be dangerous if not done safely. To help keep things running smoothly and to ensure everyone's safety, we have fairly stringent procedures that we must have and follow.

Towing Points:

When it comes to safety, the chain reaction starts here. You are required to have a safe, secure and strong towing point at the front and rear of your car. Hooks are best, but make sure they are proper towing hooks. Anything that breaks when recovering a vehicle from a bog can turn into a very dangerous flying projectile. If your towing points are holes, rather than hooks you will need to have at least a 4.7t rated D shackle. Nothing less will do.

Centrally Mounted Towball:

You will notice in the rules that you require a centrally mounted tow ball on the front of your vehicle. This is in case you break down and need to be towed by our sweep car into town. For comfort and safety, it needs to be in the centre of your car. It is important that you unbolt this ball and keep it stored elsewhere. If it is left on the car, it will be too easy for someone to drop a snatchstrap on there to pull you out of a bog. This is not safe.

Towing Equipment:

Now that we have the right towing points, we just need to use the right equipment to make sure we are safe. Your snatchem strap should also be in new condition and be a heavy duty snatchem strap. If your strap is frayed, has been used a fair bit and is 4 or 5 years old, you have got your money's worth and it is time to buy a new one. Don't throw your old one out though, keep it in your car as well.

Towing procedure:

Having the right setup and equipment doesn't automatically grant safety, it must be used correctly. We are implementing safe vehicle recovery procedures. Here is an indication as to what to expect; each and every car (backups and officials included) should select which crew member will be their recovery person. That person is then responsible for handling the equipment and communicating with the towing car. Everyone else stays well clear and has nothing to do with the operation.

FUEL CAPACITY

Often people wonder just how much petrol they should be carrying and what kind of distances they should be prepared to cover.

All the refuelling points are clearly marked in the road book each day and are no further than 450 km apart. Bear in mind that a lot of refuel points are in small towns with one bowser. If you have larger carrying capacities, you can often avoid lengthy delays by not having to wait for fuel.

On some occasions we make it compulsory to purchase a minimum amount of fuel. If this is the case, it will be clearly spelt out in the road book. The reason is because remote fuel suppliers need to make special bulk orders just for us. So we need to guarantee they will be able to sell this amount and not be stuck with it.

It states in the rules that you are required to carry a 20 litre jerry can. This is the case regardless of whether you have an extra tank or a larger capacity one. You never know when you might stone a tank or someone else might need help.

ROAD BOOK

Quite often you will hear us refer to the "Road Book". The road book is a very comprehensive book that will be given to you at registration on the first day. The road book is often referred to as the Bible. It contains EVERYTHING. Where to camp, where the food is, where the bar and entertainment is, where to start each morning, where to turn left, turn right and how far to next fuel. It will be your most treasured item on any Great Escape.

NAVIGATION

One of the hardest things to buy for your chosen car is a trip meter. Not so much that they are hard to get, but for what they cost and what you get for your money. As most of us are not into competitive motor sport, trip meters are a foreign and little known instrument, however they can make navigating around the set course a breeze.

For what they are, trip meters are quite expensive and there are not many brands on the market. In order to help you decide what to do, I have prepared a list as to what is available, how much and the pros and cons of each one.

As these units are getting more expensive all the time, it is becoming increasingly rare, if not impossible, to find second hand trip meters. It can be done, and it has been done before with no measuring device at all, but believe me, it is not much fun.



Brantz International 2

Good: The Brantz is a very robust, reliable and accurate trip meter and compared to other brands it represents good value.

Bad: Can only read 99.99 km and has very few features. Screen is difficult to read in direct sunlight.

Cost and Where To Buy: Brantz have several models, but the only useful ones are the "Pro 2" & the "Pro 2 S". They will cost \$550 and \$650 respectively. You can buy these over the phone from Ed Mulligan, 4WD World – www.4wdworld.com.au Ph: 1800 807 176



Terratrip

Good: Very robust, reliable and accurate. Has many features including average speed, speed and stop watches. Holds its value extremely well and you will have no trouble selling it down the track. Will read to 999.99 km.

Bad: The cost

Cost and Where To Buy: There are two models worth knowing about and they are the 202 plus and the 303. They will cost \$800 and \$980 respectively. Buy them through GP Cars in Brisbane. Ph 07 3356 9544.

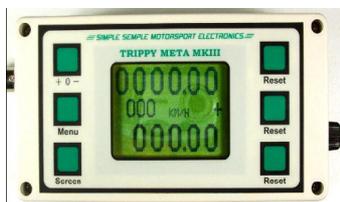


Philtronic Rally Trip

Good: Has plenty of features like the terratrip. Is Australian owned and built. Will read to 999.99 km.

Bad: This is the only new one on the market. The older Philtronic trip metres were priced right but very unreliable and prone to falling apart.

Cost and Where To Buy: This unit will cost \$695 and you can buy it straight from the manufacturer in Mt Gambier. Ph 08 8725 2895.



Simple Trip Metres

Good: Australian Made. Strong and robust with all the features you will ever need. Can tap into most vehicles electronic speedo. Very easy to use auto calibration. Exceptional value for money.

Bad: Mounting bolts/nuts on the back are small. New on the market.

Cost and Where To Buy: Approx. \$480. Ben Semple, 0418 397 017 or Email: tripmeters@optusnet.com.au

Other, Not Ideal, But Useful Alternatives

Use a GPS. Cut an old speedo from a wreck and put it on the passenger side of the car. Use an old taxi meter. Leave last car and follow the tracks! Use a push bike computer for \$28 from Dick Smiths.

FIRST AID KIT

As it states in the rules every car must have a suitable First Aid Kit. As we travel into remote areas, it is important to have more than just a Bandaid and a Panadol. Although we prepare ourselves we usually only think of the first aid kit in case of a vehicle accident, the first aid kit rarely gets used for this. It is more common for minor injuries and discomforts that you get when outside the car.

Your first aid kit should contain at least the following and be easily accessible to everyone in the car:

Item	Quantity	Description
Medical Kit Information		
Contents Booklet/Notebook	1	What your kit contains so you know what you need to replace
Emergency Action Pad	1	Separate notebook to write down what you did and found on the scene of an accident
First Aid Booklet	1	Basic First Aid Information Booklet
Personal Protection		
Protective Gloves	2	2 pairs of each size for all persons in the car (eg large, ex-large, medium etc)
CPR Face Shields	2	Or better still, a special St Johns Resus mask
Antiseptic wipes	5	Also known as Alco wipes
Bio Hazard Bags	2	Or any sterile bag for body parts (eg zipped bags) (eg cut off finger)
Essential Equipment		
Tweezers	1	Pair
Safety Pins	4	Various sizes
Scissors	1	Pair
Pen	1	
Splinter Probe	1	
Wound Treatment		
Sterile Gauze swabs	1	Packet of 5
Cotton tips	6	
Normal Saline	2	30 mls
Trauma Dressing	2	9 x 20cm
Sterile Wound Closure Strips	1	Packet of 6
Antispetic Cream	1	Tube
Wound Cover & Bandaging		
Elastic Gauze Bandage	1	5cm x 4 metres
Elastic Gauze Bandage	1	7.5 cm x 4 mettres
Crepe Bandage	1	10cm
Bandaid	1	Packet of 10
Non Stick Dressing	1	Packet of 5, 10 x 8 cm
Eye Pads	2	
Triangular Bandage	3	
Adhesive Tape	1	Roll

Blister & Burn		
Burn Aid Cream	1	Tube
Moist Burn Pad	1	10cm x 10cm
Aloe Vera	1	Tube (for continuing treatment)
Survival		
Thermal Blanket	1	Aluminium Foil
Ice Pack	1	Packet

You may add to above list with whatever you see fit to suit your individual situations and illnesses you or your crew may have. This may include medicine for asthma, high blood pressure, medicine for constipation, headaches etc. eg. Antihistamines, ibuprofen, Herron tablets, cold & flu tablets, Imodium.

RESPONSIBLE DRIVING AND BEHAVIOUR

Once again, it is the sole responsibility of the vehicle owner, crew and driver to ensure that all road laws are adhered to at all times. Never to the organisers encourage, endorse or condone unsafe driving or breaking the law in any way.

In the road book, and at daily briefings you will be reminded about this and we will also reinforce the need to drive in a safe and sensible manner and be aware of the adverse condition that you will encounter.

Just because you are part of an event, it does not exempt you in any way from the law or your responsibilities as a common road user or citizen.

INSURANCE

It is important to note that your vehicle must be covered by at least a Third Party Property damage insurance cover. It is usually not worth it, or most companies won't cover your car comprehensively.

Should you have difficulty in this area, please call the Track Boss (Terry -) or a friendly chap by the name of Ron Wilson who is very familiar in this area of insurance: Ron can be contacted on 07 4681 1289 or via email rwifs@bigpond.net.au

TIPS, TRICKS AND BASIC ESSENTIALS:

The ideas and equipment listed below is NOT compulsory, but is recommended preparation and preventative maintenance. No doubt you would have your own ideas and procedures you follow in preparation, however these are just some basic steps to ensuring you have a trouble free Great Escape. Most of this equipment and ideas come from our sweep guys who

have seen every breakdown over the past years, so they have a fair idea what can go wrong and what to carry to keep you going.

SPARE PARTS	VEHICLE CHECK
Tyres gauge, valves, dust caps, emergency plugs and 12v compressor	Check gearbox and diff breathers. They should be mounted up high with inline fuel filters attached
Full set of fan belts & hoses	Have you replaced your ball joints?
Throttle springs	Are you starting with healthy tyres? Tyres that are a few rallies old, bruised and chipped wont last
Fuel filters	Tie rod ends and idler arm bushes
Metho	Are your front wheel bearings healthy?
Wheel studs and nuts	Check brake master cylinder & callipers for leaks
Rear cross member bolts (falcon)	Shock absorbers, check for oil stains on them. Check rubbers and mounts
Upper & lower ball joints	Was your engine getting hot? Check your cooling system
Shock absorbers	Your cars fuel range will need to be able to cover 450km of steady going unassisted
Bulbs & belts for flashing light	Crack detect your stub axles and rear axles
Spare hose to bypass Automatic cooler if it gets damaged	Do you know/understand your car? Eg. Filters, pumps, relays, switches, fuses etc
Spare Uni joints	Is your tripmeter, UHF & flashing light hard wired to your battery?
Engine mount bolts	Get UHF radio checked and serviced
Duck tape & cable ties	Start with new wiper blades
Front suspension bolts that are not common eg Commodore Z bar nuts & washers	Brake booster diaphragm
Dewatering fluid – CRC, WD40	Replace brake fluid
Spare Brake Hoses – front & rear & brake line clamp	Fit new plug and leads
Spare bolts for bash plate	Check centre bolts in rear leaf springs
Spare points, rotor, cap, condenser and coil	Shackle bushes
Radiator stop leak (Ground ginger & pepper will also work as a last resort)	Wovenwire dairy mesh (6mm square x 2mm thick) for in front of radiator or on bulbar to stop sticks and stones getting in. Buy it from any hardware store
Engine/gearbox/diff oil, brake fluid & auto transmission fluid Funnel and hose to get fluid/oil in	Check engine mounts and bolts. Chain mounts or bolt through the mount
Spare wheel bearing and seals and bearing grease – or pre-pack bearings	Can you trust whoever did the work? Remember, cheap & nasty = Breakdowns
Split pins	

Spare Water pump	
Spare fuel pump for engine and or extra fuel tank. This can be set up on the vehicle before you leave	
Gasket paper, sealant and scissors	
Spare bulbs for head lights, tail lights and indicators.	
U bolts & nuts	
Spare shock absorber rubbers	
Spare relay, electrical cable, terminals and toggle switch	
Dust masks and safety goggles	
Tools, and any special/unique tools for your car	

Should you have any questions or require further assistance, please contact:

Terry Stewart
Track Boss
Ph: 0413 704 104

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