Vehicle Ownership & Service Planner

Free working edition 0.1 | November 2, 2026 | David Tom Publishing

A practical guide for general US readers. Read the worked case, complete one sheet, and keep the supporting record with it. Examples and worksheet prompts are original DTP material; all example households and figures are fictional.

Print and write by hand, or use the editable Word file. The PDFs are not fillable. Copy a worksheet for another task or use a continuation sheet labeled with its code, question and date. Unknown is a valid answer when paired with a next step.

Keep completed records private. Use aliases and record locations instead of full account numbers, identification numbers, passwords or access codes. This is an organizer, not personalized financial, legal, lending, mechanical or repair advice.

Working edition: reader, physical-print, native Word and assistive-technology acceptance remain open. PDFs are untagged; no PDF/UA compliance or professional signoff is claimed. Print one sample page before a full run.

Begin with a record you can identify

Use a vehicle nickname and connect it to the appropriate private vehicle record. Then copy the date, odometer reading, and work documented on the most recent service record. Keep recommended work in a separate field. A recommendation is not evidence that the work happened.

Record the units used for distance. Miles and kilometers should never share a running total without an explicit conversion. If an odometer entry is missing or inconsistent, flag the period rather than forcing a distance calculation.

This planner is a recordkeeping tool. A symptom description, an estimate, or an empty recall field does not establish that a vehicle is safe to operate. Questions about condition belong with the appropriate qualified provider.

Make the service history readable

For each visit, write what was requested, what the record says was performed, what was paid, and what remains open. These four fields prevent a single note from doing too many jobs. Attach the provider document reference and preserve its wording where precision matters.

When planning the next check, identify the applicable manual or provider guidance. Do not copy a service interval from another vehicle and present it as the schedule for yours. A useful next action can simply be to locate the correct guidance.

Worked case: a cost rate with a defined scope

In a fictional month, River records $120 in fuel, $80 in service, and $100 in insurance, for $300 in included costs. Recorded distance is 600 miles. The illustrative cost for these included items is $0.50 per mile.

The label matters. This is not total vehicle ownership cost. The case omits financing, depreciation, registration, and any other unlisted costs. It also describes one month, not a long-term average.

In the next fictional month, the same included costs total $300 but no miles are recorded as driven. The cost-per-mile field is not calculable for this period. Dividing by zero is not meaningful, and reporting $0 per mile would falsely suggest there were no costs. The $300 total still belongs in the period record.

Record a recall check as a dated observation

NHTSA distinguishes vehicle-specific lookup results from general year, make, and model results. Its lookup also has stated limitations, including some newly announced recalls whose affected VINs have not yet all been identified. A result should therefore be recorded with the date, lookup basis, and any follow-up, not as a permanent all-clear. [R06]

Keep the identifier used in the appropriate private record. On a shared review sheet, use the vehicle nickname and a reference to the saved result. When a remedy is completed, retain the service evidence separately from the earlier lookup result.

Finish the period without closing an open question

A tidy folder is not a reason to remove an unresolved item. Carry the question forward with its original reference. The next reader should be able to see why it remains open and what evidence would resolve it.

Check the denominator before calculating

VEH-02 needs costs and distance for the same period. A missing opening reading is missing evidence, not proof that no distance was traveled. A closing reading below the opening reading requires clarification before you use the difference.

For River's fictional period: $120 + $80 + $100 = $300; $300 / 600 miles = $0.50 per mile for those included categories. At zero miles, keep the $300 total and write not calculable in the rate field. If distance is unknown, use the same label with unknown distance as the reason.

A saved recall result belongs on VEH-03; a completed remedy belongs in the service history with its own evidence. Neither a cost rate nor an organized service file establishes mechanical safety.

VEH-01 — Service record and next question

Short notes are enough. Use a labeled continuation for longer answers; keep supporting records in their private location.

Vehicle alias and private record location

Date, odometer reading, units and record source

Requested work and documented work performed

Recommended work still open; keep separate from completed work

Paid amount, date and invoice reference

Applicable manual/provider guidance for next review

Responsible person, question and next contact

VEH-02 — Costs for a defined distance period

Short notes are enough. Use a labeled continuation for longer answers; keep supporting records in their private location.

Vehicle alias, start/end dates and units

Opening and closing odometer readings with source; flag inconsistencies

Distance for this period; unknown is not zero

Included cost categories, amounts and unique receipts

Excluded costs and missing records; total INCLUDED costs

Included cost per mile = total / miles only if miles are positive and known

If zero/unknown distance, record not calculable; keep cost total visible

VEH-03 — Dated recall lookup and follow-up

Short notes are enough. Use a labeled continuation for longer answers; keep supporting records in their private location.

Vehicle alias; identifier stored privately

Official lookup URL, date and vehicle-specific or general search basis

Result as observed and saved result location

Lookup limitations reviewed; a result is not a safety certification

Question or action to confirm with the appropriate provider

Remedy completion evidence, if actually completed

Next check and outstanding records

Sources and keeping useful records

R06 — NHTSA: Recalls

https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls

Supports distinguishing vehicle-specific from general searches and recording the limits of lookup results. No individual vehicle was checked.

Sources checked November 2, 2026. References support only the narrow points described above; they do not endorse DTP or its examples.

Label amounts and dates estimated, confirmed or unknown. Retain the underlying document and its date. A completed worksheet does not verify the records entered into it.

Keep one current master and identify older copies. Before closing an item, record the evidence of completion; carry unresolved questions forward with an owner and next action. Download updates at davidtompublishing.com/home-life-guide-downloads/.