Apple CarPlay is getting widgets and message tapbacks this fall with iOS 26

Apple announced sweeping updates to iOS 26 during WWDC 25 that’ll launch this fall, and that extends to CarPlay, its infotainment interface. CarPlay and CarPlay Ultra-compatible cars will reap the benefits of the new update, both in terms of aesthetics and at-a-glance usability. The list of cars that support CarPlay is big, but CarPlay Ultra is supported only in Aston Martin cars for now.

With CarPlay, Apple’s Liquid Glass design will make the jump to your car’s screen, adjusting its look for light and dark mode. (Please only admire the breakthrough translucency of design elements while at a red light or stop sign.) When you get a call or a text message, those alerts won’t take up a significant amount of the screen, and will instead be delegated to a small portion so you can remain focused on driving directions. On that note, CarPlay will get tapback support, letting you quickly respond to messages with an emoji.

The biggest update is widget support. CarPlay will be able to pull in your phone’s widgets, as well as Live Activities, which are real-time notifications that are useful for things like flight duration or order deliveries. What’s great news for both CarPlay users and developers alike is that getting widgets into your car requires no extra development work; the same widgets and Live Activities made for the iPhone will automatically work with the introduction of iOS 26.

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