



# Winter Car Care 2018

## PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE TODAY!



### How to store your summer tires

You are probably very proud of having bought some of the best winter tires on the market for your car or light truck. You know the value of being more careful than sorry, and that is a good way of looking at winter driving. But there is one slight problem: what will you do with the summer tires you have just taken off?

If you are lucky, the tire dealer who has sold you your winter tires will offer a storage service for the summer tire at a reasonable price. You can trust him or her, as most dealers have proper storage space kept at the proper temperature for tires. They also have a good system of keeping track of the tires so that there is very little chance of someone else driving away with them next spring.

On the other hand, if you plan to store your own tires in your garage or in your backyard shed, there are a few little things you should know. First of all, your summer tires should be stacked horizontally, one overlapping the other. They should not be stored standing on their treadwear. That goes for inflated tires mounted on rims too!

Next, make sure your summer tires are not in a highly heated place or in direct contact with sun rays. Both will harm the rubber. And don't let water reach them, as it might turn into ice and damage the tires. It is not a bad idea to keep them in the bags provided by the tire dealer. Follow these guidelines and your tires ought to still be in good shape next spring!

### Five ways to keep rust at bay

It's no secret that road salt is terrible for our cars. It does a great job melting ice and keeping roads safe during the winter, but it's also a major catalyst for rust. Of course, putting your car in storage until the return of warmer days is the best way to keep it safe from winter's harsh effects, but if that isn't an option, here are some ways you can help prevent rust from taking hold in the cold:

1. Have your car professionally rustproofed. This is especially recommended if you frequently park in-

doors. Drastic temperature variations, especially combined with the humid air in garages, provide rust with the perfect environment to thrive.

2. Slow down and keep your distances. It's the best way to minimize contact with road debris (e.g. salt, sand, rocks from other cars). Your paint job will thank you!

3. Protect the body. Install mud flaps, a grille guard (clean it often to avoid an accumulation of road salt, which could scratch the paint), or clear plastic strips to protect the

lower body frame.

4. Wash your car often. It's important to clean your vehicle periodically during the winter — even though the results won't last long! — to get rid of calcium deposits and other dirt. A dirty car is more likely to rust. Make sure to thoroughly dry everything off, and avoid washing your car when temperatures fall below -10 °C.

5. Apply surface wax. This will protect your paint job, but you'll need to act fast: the procedure requires outdoor temperatures above 10 °C to be successful.

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### Choosing the right winter tires

As the seasons change, so do your tire needs. When the cold starts to set in, switching to winter tires will improve your vehicle's traction, stability and braking power on snow-covered or icy roads. However, not all winter tires are the same. Here are a few things to consider before purchasing a new set.

1. **Mileage.** There's no point in buying high-end tires if you plan on staying in when the weather turns bad. However, more sophisticated models are a worthwhile investment if you plan on doing a lot of driving

during the winter.

2. **Location.** Road conditions vary from location to location (city, country, highway, etc.). Take this into account when shopping for new tires.

3. **Road surface.** Winter tires designed specifically for snowy conditions — even high-performance models — won't offer optimal adherence on icy surfaces.

4. **Budget.** You mostly get what you pay for when it comes to winter tires, given that price is often a good indicator of performance.

5. **Current tires.** The winter tires you currently own are a good place to start your research, especially if you've been satisfied with their performance up to now.

Finally, your ideal tires will depend on the type and size of the vehicle you drive. Of course, certain factors — like towing a trailer — can change your current needs. And don't forget, you can always visit a tire retailer or specialist should you have any questions or if you need advice from the experts.



### Ten simple steps to get your car ready for winter

The days are getting shorter and it's time to start thinking about getting your car or truck winter-ready. The last thing you want is to be left in the cold while out on the roads. Here are ten easy ways to keep your vehicle running smoothly all winter.

1. Install your winter tires and have their pressure checked (don't forget the spare!)
2. Change oil and replace any dirty filters
3. Fill the radiator with a 50/50 blend of antifreeze and water
4. Make sure your windshield wiper blades are in good condition
5. Fill up on winter-formula washer fluid and keep a spare jug in your trunk
6. Make sure the heater and defroster are working properly
7. Inspect your vehicle's headlights, tail lights and turn signals
8. Check the battery for any signs of buildup
9. Lubricate the locks and buy a lock de-icer
10. Put together an emergency kit (include a shovel, warm clothing, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, flares, tire chains, etc.) and store it in the trunk.

And there you have it: your car or truck is now ready for winter. All that's left to do before you hit the frozen road is to clear the snow off your vehicle!

#### Pre-winter inspection

Having your car inspected by a specialist is a great way to make sure its vital components — like the brakes, sparkplugs, suspension and transmission — are in good working order. A professional will also be able to spot any minor problems and fix them before they require major and costly repairs.

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### Are your windshield wipers winter-ready?

You already know how important it is to have the right winter tires installed on your vehicle when the cold weather sets in. But what about your wiper blades? Visibility being of the utmost importance while driving, these vital components are not to be neglected come wintertime.

First off, it's important to know that you should replace your wiper blades every year, and that you shouldn't be using the same blades for all seasons. Thanks to their flexible rubber sleeve, wiper blades made expressly for winter conditions prevent snow and ice from accumulating on your windshield. However, if you leave them on during the summer, sunlight and heat will cause the rubber to deteriorate. Wait until autumn before you install winter wipers. Keeping your summer wipers in your trunk during the winter is also a good idea — you never know when they might come in handy.

You'll also need to take good care of your wiper blades during the winter. This means defrosting your windshield to free the wipers if they get stuck and removing any ice and snow before you start them — your wipers aren't meant to replace your snowbrush. Be careful not to damage the rubber blade when you clean your windshield, and be on the lookout for any signs of wear and tear.

If your wipers start showing cracks, making noise or leaving streaks behind, replace them as soon as possible. Worn-out wipers are less effective, can compromise your visibility and can scratch and damage your windshield. Don't forget to measure the length of your wipers before purchasing new ones, and be sure to buy some cold weather washer fluid to help maintain great visibility all winter long.



### Signs your battery needs to be replaced

Ever dealt with a dead car battery in the middle of winter? Not much fun, is it? Drivers are far better off ensuring that their battery is in good shape before the thermometer dips. But how can you tell if your battery needs to be replaced? Here's what to look out for.



#### INDICATORS OF AGE

Car batteries typically last four to six years. One indication that yours is on its last legs is that the interior lights and/or headlights have gotten dimmer. Another good clue is that your vehicle doesn't jump to

life when you turn your key in the ignition; instead, your start up is slow, weak or inconsistent. If you're experiencing these problems and your battery is old, it's a good idea to get it checked

by a licensed technician to see if it needs to be replaced. If your battery is still under four years old, it may just need to be recharged.

#### LOW VOLTAGE

Recharge your battery when the voltage is lower than 12.4 volts. You can check the voltage using a voltmeter or multimeter. If you have a car battery recharger, you can recharge the battery yourself. Otherwise, get a professional to do it.

Provided this resolves the issue, your battery is likely still fine. However, should the problem return, check the voltage again. If the battery won't hold a charge, it's time to get it replaced. If the voltage is within range, it might be an issue with the alternator.

#### PROBLEMS WITH THE ALTERNATOR

Note that a defective alternator has similar secondary effects as a weak battery. For this reason, it can sometimes be a good idea to consult a mechanic before replacing your battery. This way you're sure to get a full and accurate diagnostic.

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## Detailing your vehicle

Washing a vehicle is one thing; detailing it is quite another. With detailing, every tiny corner of the vehicle is washed, dried, waxed and polished-until it looks brand new again.

There are many private businesses around today that will be more than happy to handle this time-consuming task for you-for a fee, of course. Unfortunately, not all of them offer complete detailing. If you really want to give your vehicle the royal treatment, chances are you'll have to look hard for the right business, or just do the work yourself. It's not all that hard to do, but it will take the better portion of an

afternoon.

Detailing a vehicle starts with a thorough cleaning. A pressure washer can be a great help. Then wipe off the entire vehicle and allow it to dry thoroughly. Follow this up with a new coat of wax. For best results, you should use solid wax that has to be applied by hand. If your vehicle has chrome accessories, be sure to use the right products to really make them shine.

The wheels also deserve some extra attention, partially if you have mag wheels. Cleaning each spoke takes time, but the results are well worth the effort. You can use a special product to make

the sidewalls of your tires sparkle-and it will make all the difference to the overall gleam of your vehicle. When it comes to cleaning all the chrome details and ornaments, patience is vital!

The downside of all this hard work is that you'll have to redo the entire operation before you know it (unless you keep your vehicle under a tarp in your garage, that is). But if you've ever seen a detailed vehicle, you'll agree the results are worth it-even if they last for only a few days.

## Did You Know?

Winter-specific windshield wiper blades are covered with a flexible rubber sleeve that prevents ice from accumulating. This increases visibility while driving, especially during freezing rain and hail.

Snow removal trucks need to keep their speed below 50 kilometres per hour to be able to clear the roads properly. So be patient when following one of these trucks, and never try to pass it — you don't know what the roads are like ahead.



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Because **COOL AIR** is dryer than warm air, **TURNING ON YOUR CAR'S AIR CONDITIONING IS A GOOD WAY TO QUICKLY DEFROST OR DEFOG YOUR WINDOWS IN ANY SEASON.** In fact, most recent cars automatically trigger the A/C when the airflow is directed toward the windshield.

If your car gets stuck on a sheet of ice, **KITTY LITTER** can come to your rescue! Thanks to its moisture-absorbing properties, litter creates enough traction on the slippery surface for your tires to grip and go.

**TIME OF DAY IS ONE OF THE MAIN RISK FACTORS FOR FALLING ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL.** Indeed, nodding off — or coming close to — while driving is more common between midnight and 6 a.m. and between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., as our metabolism tends to slow down during these periods.

Did you know?



IF YOUR CAR STARTS TO SKID OR HYDROPLANE, slowly steer in the same direction as the skid, but don't look toward it: keep your focus on where you want to be on the road.

**NEVER USE YOUR CAR'S CRUISE CONTROL ON A ROAD THAT'S SLIPPERY,** whether due to snow, ice or water. Should your back tires start to skid, the system might try to compensate by accelerating, putting you at risk of losing control of the vehicle.

At just 50 km/h, the impact of a crash is comparable to falling from a four-storey building. It also multiplies the weight of everything in the vehicle by at least 20, meaning that a 70-kilogram passenger becomes a 1,400-kilogram projectile. **ALWAYS FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT:** it cuts your risk of severe injury and death in half.

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### Should I buy studded winter tires?



There was a time, some 20 or 30 years ago, when many motorists thought that studded winter tires were the best thing since sliced bread. They probably were, back then! Since those days, though, tire companies have developed some of the best performing winter tires we've ever seen, even for driving on ice.

Nevertheless, some tires are still being sold with studs. Some of the finest Scandinavian tire manu-

facturers offer high performance winter tires with studs, but then again in those countries, the snow is usually not removed from the asphalt.

So, what is the best solution for the roads here? Some of us do have to deal with very icy roads, especially those of us in remote locales; there, studded tires are practical. Some motorists live in urban areas but regularly drive to remote places where roads are always covered

with ice or hard snow. For them, the studded tire is also a real help.

On the other hand, most motorists drive only in urban areas where roads are cleared right down to the asphalt or on major highways that are perfectly maintained by public road works. For them, studded tires are probably not the right solution. A good ice-prepared winter tire will likely do the job adequately.

If you are thinking about studded tires, be sure to verify with your local authorities. In some areas, they are forbidden for local citizens (although they are tolerated for motorists passing through). Other areas limit studded tires to certain periods of the year. Be sure you can be in compliance with such requirements before buying studded tires.

PC : Studded tires can be useful in some situations, but make sure they comply with local laws first.

### Is parking indoors a good idea?

Let's face it: having to clean snow off our car stinks, especially when temperatures drop to arctic levels. It's a tedious task that can make the best of us long for the warmth, comfort and convenience of having a garage. But do our vehicles feel the same way?



Upsides

Owning a garage does come with some obvious benefits for your car. For starters, you'll be protecting it from the harsh winter elements—which means less snow brushing and ice scraping for you, and less wear for your car's paint job. A garage also keeps the oil in your car warmer and less viscous, allowing it to lubricate the engine much faster when you start it.

Potential downsides

Humidity is the biggest problem you'll face if you store your car in the garage this winter. Letting the ambient temperature melt the snow, ice and slush off of your car is extremely convenient, but it also produces a lot of moisture. And regrettably, humidity and cars don't mix. Combined with warm temperatures and salt residue, it speeds up oxidation,

which can cause your car to rust.

Fortunately, there are some steps you can take to prevent this from happening. Avoid sharp temperature variations, which cause condensation, by keeping the temperature in your garage only a few degrees above the freezing point. Proper ventilation will allow your car to dry off faster, thereby lowering the humidity level in your garage. And you can always have your car rustproofed prior to the winter season as an added precaution.

Finally, if you do decide to park your car in the garage during the winter, try to keep the gas tank as full as possible. This will help reduce condensation, which, combined with the drastic change in temperature outside, could cause any moisture in your fuel line to freeze.

### Five winter braking safety tips



Due to the snow, ice and black ice that can accumulate on frosty roads, braking during winter is nothing less than an art: master it by following these five steps.

#### 1. KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE

When the road is snowy, slick or icy, your tires can't grip as well and more time and distance is needed to stop. Always stay a safe distance behind the vehicle in front of you when driving in such conditions.

#### 2. DECREASE YOUR SPEED

Drive at a speed that permits you to safely turn, change lanes, brake and react to hazards.

#### 3. AVOID SUDDEN ACTIONS

Suddenly accelerating, braking or turning in winter can cause your vehicle to skid. When you're approaching a stop sign or a turn, brake early and gently. Only speed up gradually.

#### 4. ADJUST YOUR BRAKING METHOD

If you don't have an anti-lock braking system, you'll need to press more gently on the brake pedal when the road is slippery. If your wheels begin to lock, regain control by pumping your brakes (applying and releasing pressure on the pedal). Slamming your foot on the brake pedal will only make matters worse.

If you do have anti-lock brakes, simply keep your foot on the pedal until your vehicle has come to a stop, even if you feel vibrations. Only use the handbrake if necessary; this action can make matters worse by causing your car to spin.

#### 5. LOOK AFTER YOUR BRAKES

Get your brakes regularly inspected, maintained and — if need be — repaired by a mechanic.

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