



## 4 winter storage mistakes to avoid

If you have a vintage ride or seasonal vehicle that you need to store for the winter, here are four mistakes you should make sure to avoid.

### 1. Storing your vehicle in an unsuitable location

If you want to keep your car in good condition over the winter, you can't store it just anywhere. Leaving your vehicle on the dirt or grass, for example, creates a lot of humidity, which can cause your car to rust. The best place to store your ride is in a dry, temperate, well-ventilated area such as a garage.

### 2. Storing your vehicle with an empty tank

To prevent condensation and rust from forming inside your fuel tank, make sure to keep it at least three-quarters full. You may also want to consider adding a fuel stabilizer to make it easier to start the engine in spring.

### 3. Storing your vehicle while it's still dirty

Deep clean your vehicle inside and out before storing it for the winter. Loose wrappers and crumbs on the inside of your car can attract pests, while water stains, bird

droppings and dirt on the outside of your car can damage the paint.

### 4. Storing your vehicle without notifying your insurer

Remember to inform your insurance com-

pany that you'll be putting your car into storage. You can often switch to a policy with a lower premium that still covers your vehicle for things such as theft and vandalism.



### Winter tune-up checklist

This winter, consider asking your mechanic to provide a complete tune-up. This will help ensure that your car runs smoothly all season long. Though your specific car's servicing needs will depend on its model, features and age, mechanics generally inspect the following components during a

- tune-up:
- Windshield wipers
  - Battery
  - Spark plugs
  - Belts
  - Steering and suspension
  - Filters
  - Brakes
  - Engine
  - Fluid levels (engine oil, coolant, brake fluid, etc.)

- Headlights and brake lights
- Exhaust system
- Heating system
- Electrical system
- Thermostat

As garages are usually busy in the winter, don't delay in making an appointment for your car's tune-up.

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## Save fuel in winter



*Saving fuel in winter is almost an art.*

Fuel is so expensive these days that all sorts of tricks are being passed along to help save any amount of the precious liquid. Winter is known to be one of the worst enemies of fuel saving motorists. How could they save more fuel?

Obviously, the choice of vehicle is where to start. We are all aware that a big V8 powered, all-wheel drive truck will gobble up gas so fast, its driver will have to spend a lot of money to keep it running this winter. But be also leery of some four-cylinder powered cars or trucks that are performance-oriented or others with turbo engines and all-wheel drive that may be real gas guzzlers.

Saving gas means driving carefully, observing speed

limits and more. Keep a careful eye on your tires' air pressure (or even better, inflate them with nitrogen!) and don't let the engine idle too long to warm-up the interior. Also, try not to carry too much dead weight in the trunk, only the necessary accessories to help you cope with winter's little surprises.

The best piece of advice for saving as much fuel as possible is to get the car in top shape before winter begins. That means choosing lighter engine oil, changing the air filter and having your mechanic look at the general maintenance of the whole car. Also, remember that a block heater with a timer to power it up in the middle of the night will make firing up the engine easier (and with less fuel) in the morning.

## Four ways to protect your windshield in winter

Want to protect your windshield against the season's hazards? Then be sure to adhere to these four easy guidelines.

### 1. Defrost windows the right way

Sudden temperature changes weaken your windshield and make it more susceptible to cracking. For this reason, never pour hot water on your windshield during winter. Instead, defrost using the vehicle's heating system. If you want to speed up the process, consider purchasing a block heater. This device has the additional advantage of providing extra warmth to your vehicle — including the windshield — when it's off.

### 2. Upgrade your windshield wipers

As your windshield is more fragile during winter, worn out or damaged windshield wipers can scratch the glass. Make sure you have high-quality wipers. Also, take care to clean them regularly and confirm that they're properly placed.

If you're purchasing new wipers, consider getting a model designed specifically for winter, made with material ice doesn't stick to. Otherwise, you can prevent ice buildup by putting a newspaper or a thin piece of cardboard between the wipers and the windshield.

### 3. Drive defensively

The best way to protect your windshield when you're behind the wheel is to cruise at a safe distance from other vehicles. In winter especially, you don't want to have rocks and other road debris flying towards your windshield.

### 4. Get cracks repaired right away

If despite taking these precautions you get a crack or chip in your windshield, get it fixed as soon as possible. Cracks tend to expand, leading to costlier repairs.

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## 5 problems cars are prone to in winter and how to fix them

Winter weather can lead to mechanical mishaps and be the cause of various issues with your car. Here are five common cold weather problems and how to solve them.

### 1. A frozen lock

Use a lock de-icer, windshield washer fluid or a hair dryer to melt the ice. If your key is entirely made of metal, you can use a lighter to heat it before slowly inserting it in the lock and (hopefully) melting the ice.

### 2. Iced over windows

Use a defrosting product in combination with a good quality scraper to quickly clear your windshield.

To stop ice from accumulating on your windshield and windows, use a tarp or large piece of cardboard to cover them while your car's parked.

Finally, prevent frost from developing inside your car by leaving a window cracked open to let the humidity escape. Alternatively, leave a container filled with cat litter open somewhere inside the cab.

### 3. Stuck wheels

Try to wedge pieces of cardboard, wood or something else that'll provide friction beneath the wheels. Traction aids, sand, cat litter and gravel are other options. Gently press on the accelerator until your tires are free.

### 4. Frozen car door

Pour lukewarm water or windshield washer fluid over the door joint (don't use hot water). Once your car door is open, make sure to wipe it thoroughly to remove all traces of the liquid.

To prevent this issue from happening in the future, apply a protective product to the rubber seal. Alternatively, place a large plastic bag between the seal and the car's frame before closing the door.

### 5. Unscheduled roadside stops

Stock your trunk with warm clothes and an emergency blanket in case you're forced to stop on the side of the road, either to wait for help to arrive or for the weather to ease.

If you're in for a long wait, crack a window so air can circulate and turn the engine on every 15 to 20 minutes.

Finally, make sure to keep an emergency kit in your trunk so you can deal with any other unfortunate winter surprises.



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## Keep useful accessories in the trunk



In order to get the best possible fuel economy, many experts will give you some very useful advice, including that of keeping the trunk empty of unused items to minimize dead weight that uses up fuel. However, in the winter there are some items that should be kept in the trunk; these may seem like dead weight, but they are actually emergency

tools in case of trouble.

Because trouble comes in many shapes in the winter, you shouldn't take any chances. Among the many items that should remain in your trunk over the winter, is a shovel. However, a full size shovel can be heavy and it can take up a lot of space in your trunk. So instead, why not buy one of those light, foldable shovels that are specifically designed to be stored in a car. Another useful item is a pair of traction devices that can come in handy in deep snow or on ice. In the past, they were made of heavy steel, however today they are available in plastic or, as shown on TV, as small aluminum plates that can be assembled to build a traction-aiding device.

Booster cables can also come in handy. But try to find a light product that is strong enough to handle the power surge. There are new products on the market with an electronic device that ensures you don't confuse the poles. A small bag of sand can also come in handy, however don't keep salt in the car. Even a small amount of salt leaking in the car will cause corrosion damage.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Regular oil tends to thicken in cold weather, which can cause your engine to run less efficiently and even prevent your vehicle from starting. Synthetic oil, on the other hand, retains its properties in cold temperatures, making it the better choice for your vehicle during winter.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

A single litre of used motor oil can contaminate up to a million litres of drinkable water. Ask your local municipality where you can dispose of your used oil. Many regions have household hazardous waste depots. Otherwise, your local garage will often take it.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

During long trips, dimming the lights on your dashboard can help you stay alert by decreasing visual fatigue. Note also that fast driving can heighten fatigue, as drivers have to process a greater amount of information.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

It's important to clear away the snow and ice in your vehicle's wheel wells. A build up of ice that rubs against your tires can damage or even puncture them.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

You can get rid of ice inside your door's keyhole by heating your key with a lighter before inserting it in the lock.



## 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 alterna-

tor 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

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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