

Winterize now...

Winter...a word most of us are not ready to hear, but with the kids heading back to school, it's just a matter of time before the first snowfall.

Driving slowly and cautiously is good advice for winter, but the Car Care Council reminds motorists of other cold weather tips. The first and most important is to be proactive. That means making sure your car is mechanically sound before the temperature dips and the streets get icy (FJ1992).

First, have your engine performance checked. Winter only magnifies existing problems like pings, hard starts, sluggish performance or rough idling, so it's important to make sure your engine is in peak condition.

Check your anti-freeze. Cooling system flushes are recommended every two years.

Have oil changes performed regularly. How often your vehicle is serviced depends on the type of driving you do. Check your owners manual to see what your type of driving is considered. Most vehicles are considered "severe service". This type of driving requires more frequent oil changes.

The charging system should also be checked. Winters' cold can drain a weak battery down quickly and leave you stranded.

Make certain the heater/defroster is working properly and keep the gas tank full. In addition to staying ready for the road, a full fuel tank will decrease the chances of moisture forming in the fuel lines and possibly freezing.

Now for the outside of the vehicle, tires, lighting and wipers. Living in an area that gets snow and ice, Car Care Council suggests checking tire tread and tire pressures weekly. Also make sure your spare tire is properly inflated.

Lights should be checked regularly. Check to make sure all bulbs are lit and headlights are aimed properly (630 1854).

Finally, check wiper blades. Car Care Council recommends replacing wiper blades every 6 months. There are also special snow blades available for winter driving.

Even the most meticulously maintained vehicle can develop problems on the road. That's when it pays to be prepared for an emergency.

In extreme weather, we always recommend delaying trips unless absolutely necessary. If you must travel, we recommend letting someone know what route you will be traveling and what your expected arrival time may be.

If you should become snow bound, always stay with your car. It provides excellent temporary shelter and makes it easier for you to be located (8316RW).

We also recommend keeping an emergency kit in your trunk, just in case. Some items we recommend are an ice scraper, windshield de-icer, flashlight, whisk broom, blanket, extra clothes, candle/matches, bottled water, snacks and needed medication. And always make sure to carry a cell phone so you can call for help if you were ever to need it.

October is National Car Care Month. Throughout October, we will be offering an Oil Change with a 60 Point Safety Inspection for just \$29.95. We will also include a free gift in honor of Car Care Month. Please take advantage of this offer and make sure your vehicle is ready for winter.

