

Tips to prepare your car for winter.

We all depend heavily on our cars, and winter weather can make for extra work for your car. Here are some tips to follow that can make getting through the winter easier

Charge it. Cold weather is tough on batteries. At zero degrees, a car's battery loses about 60 percent of its strength. Keep the battery terminals clean. Having a load test performed by a qualified technician will help determine whether a car's battery is strong enough for winter starts. If you have any doubts about the battery's performance, replace it before cold weather arrives.

Get a grip. Before winter arrives, make sure your car is equipped with tires that are able to handle tough winter weather. For most motorists, all-season tires are adequate.

See and be seen. Danger must be seen to be avoided. Driving with a snowcovered windshield, windows, side-view mirrors or lights invites a crash. Clear windows, mirrors and lights with an ice scrapper, brush or spray de-icer. Make certain windshield wipers and defrosters are in good working order and that washer reservoirs are filled with no freeze windshield washer fluid.

Slippery when wet. In temperatures at or just above 32 degrees, a thin layer of water can cover the ice, causing extremely slippery conditions. The distance needed to stop on ice at 32 degrees is twice as long as at zero degrees. Beware of "black ice" -- ice that remains on roadways that are not in direct sunlight. Use extra caution when driving on bridges; they freeze first, because they are surrounded by cold air.

Keep your engine cool. Make certain cooling system antifreeze is mixed with an equal portion of water for maximum protection

Key solution. Frozen door locks can be overcome by carefully heating the end of a key with a match or a lighter. A squirt of de-icer spray is another quick method.

Air it out. Don't let frigid temperatures tempt you into starting your car in a closed garage. Carbon Monoxide from exhaust fumes is almost impossible to detect and can be fatal when breathed in a confined area.

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