

Be Car Care Aware[®]

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Avoid Surprise, Winterize

(NAPS)—As the weather gets colder, winterizing your vehicle should be a top priority. The nonprofit Car Care Council recommends that motorists perform a six-point winter maintenance check of areas that are particularly affected by driving in rough weather.

“Harsh weather can stress out a vehicle, as well as its driver,” explained Rich White, executive director of the nonprofit Car Care Council. “A vehicle that’s properly prepared for the elements can help you avoid an unplanned road emergency when the weather takes a sudden turn for the worse.”

Six-Point Vehicle Check

1. Battery—Cold weather is hard on batteries, so it’s wise to check the battery and charging system for optimum performance. Because batteries don’t always give warning signs before they fail, it’s advisable to replace batteries that are more than three years old.

2. Antifreeze—Antifreeze (coolant) should be flushed and refilled at least every two years in most vehicles. Don’t add 100 percent antifreeze, however. Surprisingly, full-strength antifreeze actually has a lower freeze point than when mixed with water.

3. Brakes—Have the brake system checked. Brakes are critical to vehicle safety and particularly important on icy or snow-covered roads.

4. Tires—Check the tire tread depth and tire pressure, including the spare. If you’ll be driving where snow and ice are a problem, consider special tires designed to grip slick roads. Check tire pressure weekly, as tires lose pressure when temperatures drop.

5. Oil—Be diligent about changing the oil at recommended intervals and check the fuel, air and transmission filters at the same time. Consider changing to low-viscosity oil in winter, as it will flow more easily between moving parts when cold. In subzero driving temperatures, drop oil weight from 10W-30 to



A six-point vehicle check now can help prevent unexpected car trouble when the weather turns rough.

5W-30 as thickened oil can make it hard to start the car.

6. Lights and Wipers—Make sure all exterior and interior lights are working so you can see and be seen. Check the fluid level in the windshield washer reservoir and replace wiper blades that are torn, cracked or don’t properly clean your windshield.

In addition, the council recommends a thorough vehicle inspection by a trusted professional service technician as winter magnifies existing problems such as pings, hard starts, sluggish performance or rough idling.

Drivers should keep their vehicle’s gas tank at least half-full to decrease the chances of moisture forming in the gas lines and possibly freezing and stock an emergency kit with an ice scraper and snow brush, jumper cables, flashlight, blanket, extra clothes, bottled water, dry food snacks and needed medication.

The Car Care Council is the source of information for the “Be Car Care Aware” consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers.

Free Guide

To order a free copy of the popular “Car Care Guide,” visit the council’s consumer education website at www.carcare.org.