

Fall Into Good Car Maintenance Habits

(NAPSA)—While your vehicle might have cruised through warmer weather, cold weather can set in before you realize the leaves have fallen. It's important to remember that vehicles need seasonal adjusting—if you don't want to get caught out in the cold.

“Autumn is a great time for automotive maintenance and repair,” says Jim MacPherson, car care expert and automotive radio host for WTIC-AM in Connecticut. “It gives us time to repair the wear and tear and allows us to prepare for those colder days ahead. Following a simple maintenance checklist will save drivers time and money by extending the life of their vehicle and ensuring safer operation.”

To keep your car in top shape and running smoothly as we transition into cooler months, here are four big tips to keep in mind:

Tires: Good pressure, little wear and rotation

Tires lose pressure every month, and more when the temperatures drop. To maintain proper pressure, check your tires monthly and make sure they're filled up to their recommended psi rating (which can be found on the driver's side door paneling, in the owner's manual or sometimes on the tires themselves).

Drivers should also check the tread on the tires regularly for wear; replace excessively worn tires. If it has been over 5,000



Following a simple maintenance checklist can help extend the life of your car.

miles since your tires have last been rotated, it is important to do so because there's a risk of having one tire wear more significantly than the others.

Finally, if you live in a region where the temperature consistently rests around freezing during the winter months, it's a good time to start looking around for winter tires.

Oil: Switch to synthetic

Lower temperatures can add stress on your engine. To prevent engine wear, change your oil and oil filter as specified in your manual. A switch to synthetic oil, if you're not using it already, will help your car operate more efficiently.

Synthetic motor oils, such as Mobil 1, are specifically designed

to protect your engine in wide temperature ranges. For example, Mobil 1's synthetic 5W-30 flows rapidly to critical engine parts during cold start-ups, provides outstanding wear protection and keeps engines clean and running smoothly.

Cooling system: Flush and refill

The cooling system (radiator) should be checked for leaks and low levels. Additionally, it should be flushed and refilled as recommended in the owner's manual. When checking, remember to never remove the radiator cap until the engine has thoroughly cooled.

While coolant may mostly be associated with warmer weather, a vehicle's coolant (or antifreeze) is equally important in the colder months to make sure the vehicle can withstand the temperatures. A 50/50 mix of antifreeze and distilled water is the usual recommendation.

Full engine tune-up: Systems and fluid levels

If you haven't had your yearly-recommended basic tune-up, now's the time to have that done. Cooler weather will only make existing problems worse. A tune-up will correct engine problems such as stalling and diminished power, and will also ensure that fluid levels (for brakes, transmission, windshield washer, etc.) are topped off or replaced if needed.