

Car Care Corner

Keep Your Car In Top Shape For Changing Seasons

(NAPSA)—As you shift into gear for fall and winter driving, there are some basic steps to take to keep your engine humming and vehicle performance high as the temperatures drop.

According to the experts at AutoVantage, there is a simple, comprehensive checklist to keep you—and your automobile—on the road in the cold:

1. Use the “Three Ps” for safe fall and winter driving.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration advises to Prepare (maintenance checks) for the trip, Protect yourself (buckle up and use child safety seats) and Prevent (be alert, drive slower and avoid fatigue) crashes on the road.

2. Achieve antifreeze: Check your antifreeze for proper strength—it should be good to -35 degrees Celsius. Buy only ethylene glycol-based fluid with low freezing and high boiling points, and replace it every two years or 30,000 miles.

3. Fluid mechanics: Check your owner’s manual for the manufacturer’s recommended winter oil rating. A 10W-30 weight works for everything short of arctic or alpine winter conditions. Keep your reservoir full with winter washer fluid—a solvent that is good to 10 degrees below zero and be sure your transmission fluid is clean.

4. Wipers, belts and hoses, oh my: Replace your wipers, especially for night driving and encounters with rain, sleet and snow. Check all belts and hoses; cracked, frayed or worn rubber may not make it through the winter.

5. Check your tires: Take a long look at your tread. Driving in colder conditions and on icy, snowy roads requires as much traction as your tires can deliver. Replace them if you see worn tread or sidewall damage.

6. Get a charge from battery, electrical system: Check



Belts and hoses should be checked before the weather gets too cold.

your battery and charging system. Fall and winter driving requires more power from your battery, so consider buying a stronger, heftier battery.

7. Winter emergency kit: Keep these must-have items in your trunk: heavy duty jumper cables, flashlight, emergency flares, ice scraper, snow brush, small shovel, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter), blanket, gloves, heavy socks, winter boots and tire chains for snowy areas.

8. Keep your gas tank full: Always maintain a full gas tank; if you get stranded or stuck in gridlock, your engine is your only source of heat.

9. Double-check rear window defroster: If some of the lines don’t work, they can be repaired.

10. Plan your route: Allow plenty of time (check the weather and leave early), be familiar with map/directions and let others know your route and arrival time.

AutoVantage offers car-care savings from 5 to 20 percent off sales and regular rates at some 19,000 service locations, including participating AAMCO, Jiffy Lube, Meineke and American Car Care Center locations. Trip routing for maps and door-to-door driving directions across the U.S. is also included.

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