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EVERYTHING
AUTO
FALL CAR CARE

FALL CAR CARE: THE BASICS

We've all heard about the importance of winterizing your car. But when should you do so — and how?

October is National Fall Car Care Month and offers the perfect opportunity for you to make sure your vehicle is ready to handle the snow, sleet and freezing temperatures to come.

The following should be included in any "winterizing" package offered by your local repair shop, but you can also handle many of them yourself. Make a checklist to ensure you are covering all of your bases.

• **BATTERY:**

It is important to test your battery and charging system. A fully charged battery in good condition means you won't be stuck with an engine that won't start in cold weather.

• **DRIVE BELTS:**

Inspect the underside of your drive belts for signs of wear. The American Automobile Association recommends replacing your belts every 60,000 miles.

• **ENGINE HOSES:**

Check your cooling system hoses for leaks or loose clamps. You can also feel and squeeze the hoses for brittleness or sponginess.

• **TIRE PRESSURE:**

Test your tire inflation pressure more frequently in fall and winter because falling temperatures mean falling tire pressures.

• **AIR FILTER:**

The AAA recommends you check your car's engine air filter by holding it up to a 60-watt light bulb. If light can be seen through much of the filter, it is still clean enough to work effectively. If the light is blocked, it is time to replace it.

• **LIGHTS:**

Properly working lights are crucial during the fall and winter months, when evening sets in a little quicker. Check the operation of all headlights, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers and back-up lights. Replace any burned-out bulbs by following the procedures stated in the owner's manual.

• **WIPER BLADES:**

Replace any blade that leaves streaks or misses spots. Winter wiper blades come wrapped with a rubber boot to reduce ice and snow buildup. Consider installing these if you live in areas with heavy snow during the winter.

• **BRAKES:**

Have your brakes checked and changed at the first indication of a problem, usually identified by a squeaking or grinding noise.