



News Release

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MOTORISTS PREPARE, WITH THE ARRIVAL OF WINTER COMES NEW DRIVING CONDITIONS

October is AAA Car Care Month to remind drivers that cars need seasonal checkups for worry-free driving as winter approaches

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (October 1, 2012) - AAA cautions motorists that cars need seasonal checkups to maintain safety and maximize operational efficiency. Regular maintenance and seasonal checkups can also help prevent unexpected repair costs in the future. *"No one wants to be stranded by a vehicle breakdown in the middle of the cold season,"* said Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. *"Properly preparing your vehicle for winter driving is essential for the safety of all passengers and will greatly decrease the chances of your vehicle letting you down."*

AAA recommends that motorists use a simple checklist to determine their vehicle's fall and winter maintenance needs. Many of the items on the list can be inspected by a car owner in less than an hour, but others should be performed by a certified technician.

Motorists can identify reliable, high-quality repair facilities with certified technicians by looking for the [AAA Approved Auto Repair](#) sign or any AAA Car Care Center. These facilities must meet and maintain high professional standards for customer service, technician training, tools, equipment, warranties and cleanliness. Nearby shops can be located at AAA.com/repair.

Winter Car Care Checklist

Battery and Charging System – Have the battery and charging system tested by a trained technician. A fully charged battery in good condition is required to start an engine in cold weather. AAA members can request a visit from a [AAA Mobile Battery Service](#) technician who will test their battery and replace it on-site, if necessary. [AAA Approved Auto Repair](#) facilities can also test and replace weak batteries.

Battery Cables and Terminals – Make sure the battery terminals and cable ends are free from corrosion, and the connections are tight.

Drive Belts – Inspect the underside of accessory drive belts for cracks or fraying. Many newer multi-rib "serpentine" belts are made of materials that do not show obvious signs of wear; replace these belts at 60,000-mile intervals.

Engine Hoses – Inspect cooling system hoses for leaks, cracks or loose clamps. Also, squeeze the hoses and replace any that are brittle or excessively spongy feeling.

Tire Type and Tread – In areas with heavy winter weather, installing snow tires on all four wheels will provide the best winter traction. All-season tires work well in light to moderate snow conditions provided they have adequate tread depth. Replace any tire that has less than 3/32-inches of tread. Uneven tire wear can indicate alignment, wheel balance or suspension problems that must be addressed to prevent further tire damage.

Tire Pressure – Check tire inflation pressure more frequently in fall and winter. As the average temperature drops, so will tire pressures – typically by 1 PSI for every 10 degrees Fahrenheit. The proper tire pressure levels can be in the owner's manual or on a sticker typically located on the driver's side door jamb. Also, check the spare.

Air Filter – Check the 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. However, if light is blocked by most of the filter, replace it.

Coolant Levels – Check the coolant level in the overflow tank when the engine is cold. If the level is low, add a 50/50 solution of coolant and water to maintain the necessary antifreeze capability. Test the antifreeze protection level with an inexpensive tester available at any auto parts store.

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Lights – Check the operation of all headlights, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, and back-up lights. Replace any burnt out bulbs.

Wiper Blades – The blades should completely clear the glass with each swipe. Replace any blade that leaves streaks or misses spots. In areas with snow, consider installing winter wiper blades that wrap the blade frame in a rubber boot to reduce ice and snow buildup that can prevent good contact between the blade and the glass.

Washer Fluid – Fill the windshield washer fluid reservoir with a winter cleaning solution that has antifreeze components to prevent it from freezing.

Brakes – If there is any indication of a brake problem, have the system inspected by a certified technician to ensure all components are in good working order.

Transmission, Brake and Power Steering Fluids – Check all fluids to ensure they are at or above the minimum safe levels.

Emergency Road Kit – Carry an emergency kit equipped for winter weather. The kit should include:

- Bag of abrasive material (sand, salt, cat litter) or traction mats
- Snow shovel
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Window washer solvent
- Ice scraper with brush
- Cloth or roll of paper towels
- Jumper cables
- Extra warm clothing (gloves, hats, scarves)
- Blankets
- Warning devices (flares or triangles)
- Drinking water
- Non-perishable snacks for both human and pet passengers
- First-aid kit
- Basic toolkit (screwdrivers, pliers, adjustable wrench)
- Mobile phone and car charger pre-programmed with rescue apps and important phone numbers including family and emergency services

Android and iPhone users can download [AAA Roadside](#), a mobile smartphone app that lets motorists in roadside rescue situations to request help without making a phone call. The user simply enters the details of their situation and clicks an onscreen button. [AAA Roadside](#) then transmits the information, and the user's location as established by the phone's GPS technology, directly to AAA Roadside Assistance. The app also displays nearby AAA Approved Auto Repair locations so members can easily choose where to have their vehicle towed, if necessary.

AAA Membership is not required to download and use AAA apps, but is needed to take advantage of the associated member benefits such as roadside assistance and *Show Your Card & Save* discounts. For more information on AAA apps, visit [AAA.com/Mobile](#).

As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit [AAA.com](#) and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](#).

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Car Care Checklist



Oil Change Many motorists believe their cars' oil should be changed every 3,000 miles, however most late-model vehicles now can go 5,000 to 7,000 miles between oil changes. Check your owner's manual and get on a routine to good car care.



Tires Check tire pressures and tread depth. Check the pressure on all the tires—including the spare—with a quality gauge when the tires are cold. Be sure to look for recommended pressure on the driver's door jamb and NOT the tire wall!



Battery Ensure the battery cable connections are tight, and the terminals are free from corrosion. If the battery is more than three years old, it's a good idea to have it tested to determine how much life it has left.



Wiper Blades Wiper blades should completely clear the glass with each swipe. Make sure the windshield washer reservoir is filled.



When in doubt, visit
www.AAA.com/repair