



News Release

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AAA HAS ADVICE FOR THE DEAD OF WINTER BATTERY WOES

AAA Provides Tips for Motorists as Cold Weather Takes a Toll on Vehicles

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (Tuesday, January 22, 2013) – With freezing overnight temperatures expected for the remainder of the week, AAA reminds motorists that the cold weather is extremely tough on vehicles.

Traditionally, car batteries last an average of 37 months in a hot climate, but now, the average life of a battery can be as little as 2 years because of the massive amount of power required by the average 'modern' car and driver, according to AAA Tidewater Virginia Roadside Assistance Program.

"The power needs of a modern-day vehicle drain the same 12-volt battery drivers have relied on since 1960," said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Affairs. "Car batteries used to charge items such as cell phones, iPods, and navigation systems are more likely to need to be charged and replaced sooner than one might expect. Cars also draw extra energy to power fans, security and diagnostic systems, and engine management tools, even when the car is not being driven."

"Drivers may get an early warning when their car battery is about to die. Motorists may notice their car will start slower than usual, interior lights may start to dim or flicker and after-market equipment may not function properly," advised Blumling. "This is the time to test the battery to see if it needs to be charged or replaced to prevent being stranded."

Should your vehicle not start due to battery issues, AAA offers the following tips on how to properly jump start your car battery:

- See your owner's manual for detailed information on how to care for your vehicle.
- Always wear safety glasses when jump starting a battery in case of an explosion.
- Check for visible signs of failure, such as corroded or loose connections.
- Attach the negative connection to the metal frame of the car to avoid too much power going into the negative battery.
- Attach jumper cables to dead battery first to prevent live cables.
- Attach positive cable and negative cable last to the live battery to avoid sparks.
- Always double check connections to make sure you have correct polarity to avoid damage to the car's electrical system.
- If in doubt, you can always use your AAA Membership and call on AAA's service technicians to assist you with your car battery.

The auto club also recommends checking for secure connections and cleaning away any corrosion on the battery and its clamps. If the battery is out of warranty, it's advisable to have it tested as cold weather puts an added load on the battery. If replacement is necessary, keep in mind that not all batteries are the same. Have a certified technician help select the proper battery for the vehicle type

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and the local climate. In Hampton Roads, AAA members can make an appointment to have a AAA Mobile Battery Service technician visit their home or office to check and replace batteries as needed.

In addition to cold weather wreaking havoc on auto batteries, other components are susceptible to wear or failure, such as belts and hoses, when the temperature drops. AAA provides the supplementary checklist to help motorists prepare for the winter chill:

- **Antifreeze.** Check antifreeze annually to ensure it will withstand the winter cold. A 50/50 mixture of coolant and water will protect against freezing.
- **Windshield wipers and washer fluid.** Replace wiper blades if they do not clear the glass in a single swipe without streaking. Fill the windshield washer reservoir with winter detergent fluid to prevent freeze up.
- **Tires.** Cold weather reduces tire inflation pressure, so check tire pressures frequently and maintain the vehicle manufacturer's recommended levels. Motorists should never reduce tire pressure in an attempt to increase traction on snow and ice. This does not work and leads to excessive tire wear. Motorists in areas where it snows should make sure their tires have an M&S rating, which means they provide the added traction required in snow. In areas that have heavy snow fall, using snow tires and chains during winter months provides added safety and may be required by local laws. For best results, snow tires should be fitted to all four wheels.
- **Belts and hoses.** Replace accessory drive belts that are cracked, glazed or frayed, as well as coolant hoses that are visibly worn, excessively soft or bulging. Check for leaks around hose clamps and the water pump.
- Other important areas to have a certified technician check in preparation for winter include the vehicle's **fluid levels, lights, brakes, exhaust system** and **heater/defroster**. Motorists should also remember to continue regular oil and filter changes at the intervals recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.

AAA also encourages motorists to update their emergency roadside kit for winter to include a mobile phone and car charger; blankets; a flashlight with extra batteries; a first-aid kit; drinking water; a small shovel; a sack of sand or cat litter or traction mats; windshield scraper and brush; battery booster cables; and emergency flares or reflectors.

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](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).

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