



## News Release

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### AAA OFFERS TIPS ON FLOODWATER DAMAGE TO YOUR VEHICLE

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA. (October 30, 2012)**- A car damaged by floodwater should not be started until a thorough inspection and cleaning is performed, warns AAA. "In addition to the obvious damage done to upholstery and carpeting, flood water is a corrosive and abrasive mixture of water and dirt that forces its way into every seam and crevice of an automobile," explained, Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia.

If the car has been completely or partially submerged, it may be necessary to disassemble all mechanical parts for a thorough cleaning and lubrication. "The most vulnerable on a vehicle are the engine, transmission, and power steering systems," Blumling said. "Unless completely removed, dirt and other contaminants can cause premature wear of vital components and shorten the life of the vehicle." In Hampton Roads, AAA Car Care Centers and AAA Approved Auto Repair Facilities are available to assist motorists who suspect water damage of their vehicle as a result of floodwaters caused by Hurricane Sandy.

AAA recommends car owners contact their insurance companies to determine the extent of coverage before seeking repairs. Before attempting to start a flood-damaged car, a qualified auto technician should:

- Inspect all mechanical components including the engine, transmission, steering system, axles, and fuel system for water contamination.
- Drain floodwater from contaminated systems and flush with clean water or a solvent, as appropriate.
- Drain and replace all contaminated fluids, such as oil, transmission fluid, and engine coolant.

"The car's electrical system is also vulnerable to the damaging effects of flood water. Water-sensitive components may need to be replaced," Blumling said. "Engine computers, airbag sensors and other electronic devices can sometimes be salvaged, but corrosion and oxidation can occur several weeks after the components are cleaned." There are many parts of the car that are difficult to clean and dry because they are virtually inaccessible. Door locks, window regulators, wiring harnesses, heating and air conditioning components and many small devices are tucked away in hidden spaces. These items may fail at a later date because of contamination by dirty water. "Total restoration of a flood-damaged car can be as extensive and expensive as restoring a classic," Blumling warned. "Compare the value of the vehicle to be restored to the cost of restoration before proceeding with flood-related repairs."

Car buyers in all parts of the United States should be aware that flood damaged vehicles can be shipped anywhere for resale and could be in the marketplace for many months. Having a vehicle inspected by a qualified technician and checking its title history should help determine whether it sustained flood damage. A telltale sign of flood damage on new and used cars is the presence of dried mud on components under the hood. A damp or musty odor in the trunk or interior is another warning sign. In older cars, new carpet and upholstery may indicate flood damage.

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