



CAR CARE CORNER

Winterizing Your Family Car



(NAPSA)—Taking steps to winterize your car can help keep small problems from snowballing into big ones.

That's because a broken-down vehicle can put winter motorists in a dangerous—or even life—threatening situation. In addition, cold weather causes difficult road conditions, which drivers can better handle if their automobiles are working properly.

“A vehicle is a major investment,” says Pete Patterson, Brand Manager of GM Service and Parts Operation. “Though it's often overlooked, winterizing is an important part to proper vehicle service and maintenance.” Patterson says GM Goodwrench dealers have worked on hundreds of thousands of vehicles and know what the frigid temperatures can do to a car or truck.

According to weather experts, winter 2002-2003, is expected to bring lots of snow and bad weather. Even more temperate areas are expected to get hit with occasional cold spells.

“Safe driving during the snow season has its own special requirements,” says Patterson. “It's important for motorists to make sure the engine coolant mix is correct and that tires and brakes are in good shape, too. Additionally, they should

consult their vehicle's Owner's Manual and make sure that their car is ready for winter driving.” For more information on GM Goodwrench or to find an area dealer, visit Goodwrench.com.

Here are some additional tips motorists can use to keep themselves and their families safe during winter road trips:

1. Do not drink and drive. Alcohol is the number one contributor to highway traffic deaths.

2. Buckle up correctly—every time, on every trip—and insist that all passengers do likewise. For information on proper restraint use, refer to your vehicle Owner's Manual, child restraint manual or go to www.ourpreciouscar.com.

3. Do not drive when you're stressed out or tired. On long trips, share driving responsibilities with a “co-pilot,” and build ample time into your itinerary for breaks.

4. Make sure your car is prepared for winter weather. Pay close attention to engine coolant, brakes, tire condition and tire pressure. Make sure the spare tire and jack are readily accessible.

5. Be prepared. Keep winter emergency supplies in your car such as an ice scraper, extra gloves, boots and a blanket, flashlight, small brush or broom and windshield washer fluid.

6. Check your wipers. Windshield wipers top the list of most ignored piece of equipment on a vehicle. Wipers can take a real beating over the course of a year, and should probably be replaced annually. Check to see if it's time to replace them by inspecting for brittleness and small cracks.

7. Stay within recommended following distances, especially on snow and ice.

8. Don't get stuck. Chicken grit and kitty litter are ideal for pouring under the driving wheels when a vehicle gets stuck in the snow. Store bags of the grit or litter in the trunk to help add weight and traction to rear-wheel drive vehicles.

9. Give 'em a brake. Remember, if your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, do NOT pump the brake pedal. Apply steady pressure.

10. Tire maintenance. Poorly maintained tires can be dangerous. It's important to rotate tires every 6,000 to 7,500 miles and check inflation and treadwear before taking any extended trips.

With over 7,000 participating dealerships, the GM Goodwrench network is the largest automotive service chain in the industry. Its technicians receive specialized training from General Motors to provide expert care for GM cars and trucks.