

Getting Your Vehicle Ready For Warm-Weather Driving Conditions

(NAPSA)—As the weather heats up, be sure not to give your car the cold shoulder. Instead, take some time to do a bit of routine maintenance in order to ensure a safe, comfortable and fuel-efficient driving season.

“Simple maintenance to your vehicle following the harsh winter months can make a huge difference when it comes to keeping your car on the road and getting the most out of this driving season,” says Jim MacPherson, car care expert and automotive radio host for WTIC-AM in Connecticut.

MacPherson suggests that you should help prepare your car for warm-weather drives by following this simple checklist before you hit the road.

Check Your Tires

First things first: If there’s no snow on the ground, you shouldn’t have winter tires on your car. If you do, it’s time to take them off and replace them with all-season tires, which deliver better traction in a wider range of roadway conditions. Also, balance and rotate your tires for a smoother ride and improved fuel economy. Finally, check the air pressure. The right amount of air pressure will also help to improve your fuel economy while also increasing the life span of your tires and delivering better handling.

Brake Check

It never hurts to have your brakes checked. Start by simply listening to your car the next time you apply the brakes. If your brakes are making a scratching/squealing sound, you probably have worn brake pads or shoes. You should have this checked by a professional immediately as this can cause permanent damage to your brakes and result in less-effective stopping.

Change Your Oil

The oil in your engine should reflect the outside temperature. If you haven’t changed the oil for a



As the weather heats up, it’s important to make sure that your car is ready for the change of season.

while, give your engine some new life by using a fully synthetic motor oil, such as Mobil 1, when changing your oil. Synthetic motor oils provide outstanding performance and protection in a wide range of conditions and in some cases improve your fuel economy. (For more information about Mobil 1, go to www.mobil1.com.)

Check Your Fluids

We’ve all had one of those annoying moments when you hit the windshield washer and nothing comes out. Take this opportunity to not only check your washer fluid but to also check other essential fluids that may have been depleted. Check, top off or replace the brake fluid, the transmission fluid, coolant, power steering fluid and windshield washer fluid.

Replace Wiper Blades

Freezing temperatures during the winter months can make the rubber on your wiper blades hard and brittle, which increases their tendency to crack or tear. Add to this the combination of snow, ice and salt that can encase your wipers for hours at a time and you’ve got worn-out wipers. Replace your windshield wipers this spring and you’ll have a clear,

unobstructed view of the road.

Test Your Air-Conditioning

Before the mercury gets too high, run a quick test of your car’s air-conditioning system. Turn the AC on high and to the coldest level. Check to make sure the air coming out of the vents is cold, 55 degrees or less, and that the airflow is strong and will adequately cool the interior of the vehicle. If you experience any problems or hear unusual noises, have someone examine belts and hoses for wear, deterioration or refrigerant leaks.

Apply A Protectant

Similar to applying suntan lotion at the beach or lake, it is important to remember that your car can be damaged by the sun as well. Apply a protectant to vinyl areas of your car’s interior, such as the steering wheel and dashboard. Still, be careful. Many protectants add a level of gloss that, when applied to the instrument panel, can cause distracting—or even dangerous—windshield reflections. Also, these products can be slippery, so their use on a steering wheel might cause some problems. Finally, consider applying a polish or wax to the exterior of the car as well, after a thorough cleaning, of course.