

Be Car Care Aware™

Winterizing Vehicles—Whatever The Weather

(NAPSA)—Whether winter roars like a lion or unseasonable temperatures make it seem more like a lamb, it's important to take steps to winterize your car.

That's the advice from experts who say that motorists should have their vehicle's battery, antifreeze, wipers and wiper fluid checked to help avoid "no starts" and breakdowns—and to ensure safety and visibility during winter driving conditions.

Still, the Car Care Council reports that 70 percent of motorists don't winterize their vehicles. The group offers these tips to help keep drivers on the road to safety:

- Clean, flush and put new antifreeze in the cooling system. As a general rule of thumb, this should be done every two years.

- Make sure heaters, defrosters and wipers work properly. Consider winter wiper blades and use cold weather washer fluid. As a general rule, wiper blades should be replaced every six months.

- Have the battery and charging system checked for optimum performance. Cold weather is hard on batteries.

- Check the tire tread depth and tire pressure. If snow and ice are a problem, consider special tires designed to grip slick roads. During winter, tire pressure should be checked weekly.

- Be diligent about changing the oil and filter every 3,000 miles. Dirty oil can spell trouble in winter. Consider changing to a "winter



The Car Care Council says vehicles should be winterized to keep them dependable and safe when temperatures dip.

weight" oil. Have your technician check the fuel, air and transmission filters at the same time.

- If you're due for a tune-up, have it done soon. Winter magnifies existing problems such as pings, hard starts, sluggish performance or rough idling.

- Have the brakes checked. The braking system is the vehicle's most important safety item.

- Have the exhaust system checked for carbon monoxide leaks, which can be especially dangerous during cold weather driving when windows are closed.

- Check to see that exterior and interior lights work and that headlights are properly aimed.

As a final note, it's important to remember that cars can be winterized after cold weather hits. What matters is that a car is made safe, not the time of year the work is done.

For more information, visit www.carcare.org.