

Car Care Corner

Spring Cleaning Should Include Your Car

(NAPSA)—The warm season brings the need for cleaning and other improvements around the house, the yard and the wardrobe. Attention should also be devoted to your car and it should include a lot more than cleaning the exterior and interior. One needs to recognize the harsh conditions your prized vehicle went through this past winter and take steps to get it back in shape!

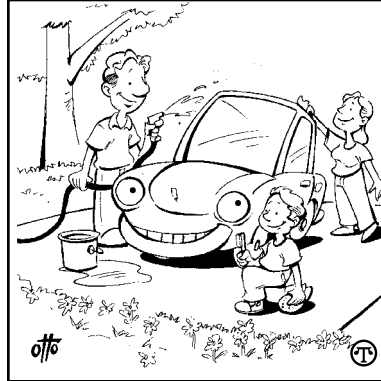
Cold starts are highly detrimental to your vehicle's engine. A lot of the overall wear and tear on an engine takes place by turning the ignition on during the cold months.

Gas can stick on cylinder walls, and when released upon starting, it creates more than the optimum amount to its mixture with oil. Cold starts also melt the condensation that forms inside of the engine during the winter and can contaminate the oil. Also, if drivers don't take long trips, the engine may rarely reach its proper temperature operating level. These factors and others place a strain on the battery and electrical system and reduce the longevity of spark plugs.

Cold weather and short trip driving are also two of the criteria that constitute severe driving. Most manufacturers recommend that drivers in this category should change the oil in their vehicle every 3,000 miles.

An oil change as part of an overall vehicle maintenance service will help put "spring" back into your prized possession. A lighter oil would be more compatible with the upcoming warmer months. Jiffy Lube offers a choice of synthetic oils based on the type of vehicle and how one drives. All fluid levels should be checked and Jiffy Lube technicians can tell you if they need replacing based on manufacturers' recommendations. Make sure all hoses and belts are checked after the tough winter.

There are also many activities



Thoroughly wash the exterior of your vehicle, including the undercarriage.

you can do on your own. Check the treads of tires for small stones that thawed ice may have left behind. Water will have seeped into various joints and hinges of the hood, trunk top and all doors during the winter; wipe clean and lubricate all of these points.

When you give the exterior of the car a good wash, don't forget to spray underneath. Salt and mud will have accumulated in the undercarriage of the vehicle and should be flushed away. Make sure to check that the windshield wiper blades are in good shape; you may have inadvertently damaged them while scraping away ice during the winter.

If you had a roadside emergency during the winter, you may have used the flashlight, flares, extra wiper fluid or other materials. Take inventory to make sure everything is in good working order or replacements are made.

Vacuuming the interior and removing trash and any unnecessary objects that accumulated over the winter not only improves the appearance but reduces weight which increases engine efficiency.

Speaking of efficiency, following all of these tips can lead to less gas consumption, so you spend a little more on enjoying the onset of warmer weather.