

Get Ready, Get Set, Go Winterize Your Car

Winter's just around the corner and chances are your vehicle needs some preventive maintenance to get it ready for the cold weather ahead. According to AAA, the most frequently uncovered problems in its annual vehicle inspections are improper tire pressure or low or dirty motor oil, anti-freeze, or other automotive fluids. AAA offers the following advice for motorists preparing for the winter driving season:

Get ready: Before you drive long [seo AUSTIN](#) distances, check the weather conditions along your route. Remember to bring a cellular phone and a winter driving kit that includes a flashlight with fresh batteries, a snow shovel and brush, traction mats, ice scraper, booster cables, a blanket, flares, heavy gloves, window washing solvent and a first-aid kit.

Get set: Inspect your vehicle thoroughly before leaving your driveway. Ensure that your tires are properly inflated, fluid levels are full, front and rear lights are operating, and belts and hoses are in good condition. Also, keep in mind that one of the most common causes of cold-weather breakdowns is a weak or dead battery. Good indicators that your battery is weak and may need replacement include a starter motor that cranks the engine slowly when the ignition key is turned or headlights that dim noticeably when the engine speed drops to idle. If you are unsure about any aspect of your vehicle's condition, visit a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility for expert maintenance and repair services.

Go: Now that your vehicle has the green light, here are some winter driving tips to get you to your destination safely.* When driving in slippery and icy conditions, slow down and keep a safe distance from other vehicles. Minimize your brake use and remember that traction is greatest just before the wheels spin. Applying gentle pressure on the accelerator pedal when starting is the best method for retaining traction and avoiding skids.* The most effective way to stop on ice and snow is to apply your brakes gently, well in advance of the point where you intend to stop. If your car has an antilock braking system, do not pump your brakes; continue to apply firm pressure to the brake pedal until your vehicle comes to a complete stop.



* Keep your seatbelt fastened and make certain that all passengers are securely restrained.* When driving in falling snow or fog, lower your speed, use your low-beam headlights or fog lights and keep a safe distance from vehicles in front of you.* To help avoid gas line freeze up, keep your gas tank at least half full to minimize condensation.