

For Immediate Release

Can your vehicle survive the deep freeze?

With record-breaking cold temperatures expected this winter, many Canadians may opt to stay indoors as much as possible. But when you do need to venture out into the icy air, how can you be sure that your vehicle will be up to getting you to where you need to go?

Cold weather is notoriously harsh on vehicles, which is why it's all the more important to give your car a little extra time and attention when the mercury dips. Fortunately, the Be Car Care Aware program has some tips to make sure that your car won't cause you any trouble.

Check your defroster – When the temperature drops, moisture in your vehicle condenses on your windows and impedes your visibility. Be sure to check that your defroster, which blows warm dry air on the glass, is in good working order before hitting the road. If you find that you're still having problems with condensation, check the gaskets around your windows and doors for leaks.

Replace your heater coil – In Canada's harsh climate, a working heater is a must in your vehicle to stave off shivers. If your heater isn't working properly, chances are you need to replace your heater coil. Though this can be an expensive repair, you'll be glad you made the investment.

Keep your gas tank half full - The air volume in your tank contains moisture that can freeze your fuel lines in cold temperatures. Keeping your fuel tank at least half full over the winter months will help prevent this freezing by limiting the air volume in the tank and will provide you with the benefit of extra weight for better traction on icy roads.

Switch to a winter-weight oil – In cold temperatures, your oil tends to thicken, preventing it from effectively lubricating your engine. To avoid engine trouble, check your owner's manual for the recommended type of cold weather oil and switch to a more viscous formulation.

Use the right amount of antifreeze – It's important to keep the right ratio of antifreeze and water in your radiator to prevent your coolant from freezing in cold weather. A 50:50 ratio is accepted as the norm, so consider using a pre-mixed solution to avoid getting the ratio wrong and to ensure that your engine runs effectively.

Check your battery – In frigid weather, the most common vehicle troubles are related to the battery. Your battery should be changed every 3-5 years, so if you're having problems with starting your vehicle or with stalling, consider changing your battery. You should also check the battery to ensure that all the connections are tight and corrosion free. Finally, don't charge or jump your battery if it's frozen due to the risk of a rupture or explosion. When in doubt, leave it to the pros.

Let your car warm up – It's a good idea to let your engine warm up a bit before hitting the road in extreme cold to avoid grinding gears or causing undue stress to your engine. Just make sure to do it in an open space.

Wax your headlights – Fluctuations in temperature often lead to messy road conditions and your headlights can quickly become coated in frozen slush. To ensure optimal visibility, consider cleaning off your headlights, coating them with car wax, and then buffing the wax off. The resulting slippery surface will help to prevent frozen build-up.

No one wants to be stranded out in the cold, especially when wait times for assistance are exceedingly long. To keep your car in top winter shape, check out www.BeCarCareAware.ca.