

Before winter comes

Protect your vehicle

Winter is on its way. Combat the tough road conditions by ensuring you and your vehicle are properly equipped.

1. Get a basic tune-up. Hoses, belts, spark plugs, wires, brakes and tires should all be checked and changed if necessary. Oil and oil filters should be replaced and the engine oil should reflect the weight recommended in your owner's manual.

2. Protect the vehicle's exterior. Your vehicle is going to be bombarded with ice, snow, sleet and hail.

A good wax can mean the difference

between a shiny protective layer on your vehicle's finish and an unsightly dull, possibly damaged clear coat in the spring. Throughout the winter, make sure your car gets a good wash every few weeks to help reduce corrosion caused by nasty road salt.

3. Prevent engine freeze ups. If there is too much water and not enough antifreeze in the system, it can freeze, expand and crack key engine components. Before temperatures plummet, top off your cooling system.

—News Canada

From lawn mower to snow blower

The days are getting shorter. The nights cooler. And finally, your grass has stopped growing. Looks like it's time to store your lawn tractor or mower for the winter. And get that trusty snow thrower ready for use.

The key thing to know about outdoor power equipment is that their number one enemy is dirt. And their number two enemy is condensation. So start off by cleaning that lawn tractor or mower. Remove any surface grunge with a hose, then get underneath and scrape out any matted grass or cuttings with a paint scraper and screwdriver. Then clean the exterior with soapy water or a quality cleaner. Now you are ready to replace or clean the air filter and grease any cables or fittings that need attention. Next, either fill it right up, or drain it completely of gas, depending on the manufacturer's instructions. Finally, and

most important, change the engine oil, always using a quality product.

Remove the wheels and store your tractor off the ground on blocks if possible, preventing any air-filled tires from going square. Finishing off, protect the tractor or mower with a covering that breathes. Something like a painter's drop sheet or heavy burlap is good. This allows any condensation to evaporate naturally, minimizing the possibility of rust. Store your equipment in a clean and dry place.

As far as getting that blower ready for use, the same basic rules apply. Give it a good cleaning. Check for debris stuck in the blades. Lubricate any cables and fittings. Then replace the air filter and be sure to change the oil—and also use new gas or gas/oil mixture. Outside of a new spark plug, you should now be ready for winter.

—News Canada



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