



**MILLIONS OF SCRAP TIRES** blight the environment. Retreads can help to reduce the scrap tire problem.

## Getting ready for winter driving? Here are ten tips

The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), a non-profit organization which administers national certification tests to automotive technicians, offers the following tips to help you get ready for winter driving. Some are a cinch; others require the skilled hands of a professional auto technician.

1. **Getting started.** All drivers, even those who never turn a wrench, should start by reading the owner's manual and becoming familiar with the basic vehicular systems. Motorists will be happily surprised to learn that the manufacturer has provided numerous useful tips on driving, safety, and maintenance. The recommended service schedules should be followed.

2. **General cleaning/maintenance.** Autumn is the perfect time to apply a protective coat of wax or polish. Inspect all lights and replace burned out bulbs. Replace worn wiper blades—summer's dust and insects are tough on them—and make certain you have plenty of washer fluid to fight road salts and grime. Carry emergency gear such as gloves, boots, blankets, flares, a flashlight, etc.

3. **Battery.** The battery is called on to work very hard in cold weather (hard starts in the mornings, increased use of headlights and the heater blower, etc.), but as temperatures drop so does the cranking power of most batteries. Battery failure is a typical cold-weather problem. The only accurate way to detect a weak battery is with the professional equipment available at good repair shops. Most people, though, can perform routine care. Scrape away corrosion from posts and cable connections; clean all surfaces; re-tighten all

connections. Wear eye protection and rubber gloves to avoid contact with the corrosive deposits and acid.

4. **Engine oil.** The oil change is one of the most vital maintenance tasks, yet it is one of the most neglected. The oil and filter should be changed as specified in your owner's manual—more often (every 3,000 miles), if you do a lot of stop-and-go driving, carry heavy loads, or drive long distances.

5. **Cooling system.** To help prevent radiator freeze-ups and/or overheating, the cooling system should be completely flushed and refilled about every 24 months. The level, condition, and concentration of the coolant should be checked periodically. Never remove the radiator cap until the engine has cooled down. A 50/50 mix of anti-freeze and water is usually recommended. The tightness and condition of drive belts, clamps, and hoses should be checked by a pro.

6. **Engine performance.** If you noticed engine driveability problems such as rough idling, hard starts, stalling, and diminished power during the summer, by all means get them corrected now before harsh weather sets in. The air, fuel, and PCV filters should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

7. **Heater/defroster.** For your comfort and safety, the heater and defroster should be in good working condition. To prevent potentially deadly fumes from entering your vehicle, have your exhaust system examined for leaks and the underbody (and trunk) inspected for small holes.

8. **Tires.** Balding tires are a safety hazard and of little use in snow and slush. Tires should be rotated about every 5,000 miles. The air pressure should be checked once a month; let the tires "cool down" first. Check the sidewalls for nicks and cuts. Examine

tires for tread life, uneven wearing, and cupping.

9. **Brakes.** Regular maintenance will extend the life of your brakes and will prevent more costly repairs due to neglect. Brakes should be inspected as recommended by your manual, or sooner if you notice pulsations, grabbing, noises, or longer stopping distances.

10. **Finding good auto service.** A repair shop is only as good as the technicians who work there. An increasingly popular way to judge the technical know-how of individual technicians is to look for certification. The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) conducts the only national, industry-wide competency testing program for working technicians. ASE-certified technicians wear blue and white shoulder insignia and carry pocket credentials listing their areas of technical expertise (electrical systems, engine performance, etc.), while their employers often display the ASE sign on the premises. There are about 250,000 ASE technicians throughout the nation at every type of repair facility.

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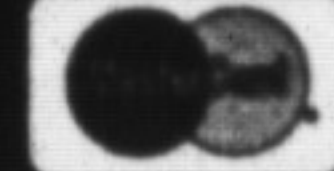


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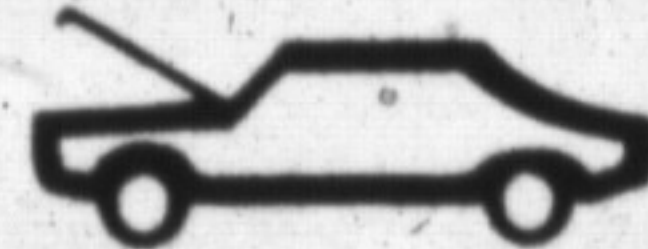
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