

car care

Remember the 'Big Three' for winter starts

On a cold winter morning, no sound is more pleasant than a car engine that starts on the first turn of the key. Motorists whose cars are unprepared are easily identified by the tell-tale open hoods or incessantly whining starter motors.

The Hamilton Automobile Club advises you to stay on the go this winter by paying special attention to three systems—battery, ignition and engine lubrication. Your car will start best when all three systems are properly maintained.

The battery generates the power to rotate the engine until the ignition system can keep it running. The most important thing to check is the battery's water level. Sealed, "maintenance-free" batteries must be replaced when the built-in indicator shows

insufficient water levels. Batteries do not recharge as quickly in cold weather. It's a good idea to have your battery tested to see if it is delivering its rated power under load. The battery connections should also be cleaned of corrosion and oxidation—this helps to ensure efficient delivery of the battery's power.

important, but engine lubrication can determine whether or not a car starts—particularly on days when the temperature drops below minus 18 degrees Celsius.

Most engines need thinner oil in extremely cold weather. Thinner oil allows the starter to rotate the engine faster, using less battery power.

Come on, are you ready?

Could you leave tomorrow, driving your car across the country and back again without special preparations for the car? If you truthfully can answer "yes" to that question, your car is probably well-main-

tained and ready for winter.

For many people car care is a sometime, once-a-year concern, but regular preventive maintenance by a competent mechanic on a schedule set in the owner's manual is the best year-round insurance against unexpected breakdowns, winter or summer.

For people who have let the care of their car slide, here are some tips from the Hamilton Automobile Club.

A 50/50 mixture of anti-freeze and water in the cooling system gives 37 degrees C. freezing protection in winter, plus inhibiting internal system corrosion all year round. If anti-freeze is two years old, it's due for a change.

Automobile starting and charging systems work together and are serviced together. A fully-charged battery with clean terminals and correct water level is a must for quick starts. A test under load will confirm its fitness for winter. The cause of inadequate battery charge may be as simple as a loose belt on the alternator. A charging system check will confirm that the battery is receiving a charge.

A faulty ignition system can prevent a car with the best battery from starting. Even on newer cars, replacing spark plugs every 19,200 km. is a good investment to insure prompt winter starts. A quick start taxes the battery less. An ignition system reserve voltage test will provide a condition report.

The fuel system's automatic choke or other cold start device needs to operate freely, and at the proper times. An inspection will identify anything amiss. H.A.C. inspection vans are available to members.

Lubrication systems need the proper viscosity of oil to prevent excessive drag and wear during starting. Most car makers

recommend 5W-30 weight oil for starting or operating when the temperature is below 0 degrees C. An oil marked "API-SF" provides the best protection.

Snow tires, the final checklist item, should be installed on the same side of the car that they were removed from if they are previously used radials.

Anyone who depends on a car in winter has two choices: maintain it at your convenience, or repair it at your inconvenience.

Here's your check list for winter emergencies

Careful driving and a well maintained car with a fool proof heater don't necessarily give you immunity from winter wipe outs. If you intend to travel any great distance in less than mild conditions, make sure you are prepared for anything with these winter driving essentials provided by the Hamilton Automobile Club.

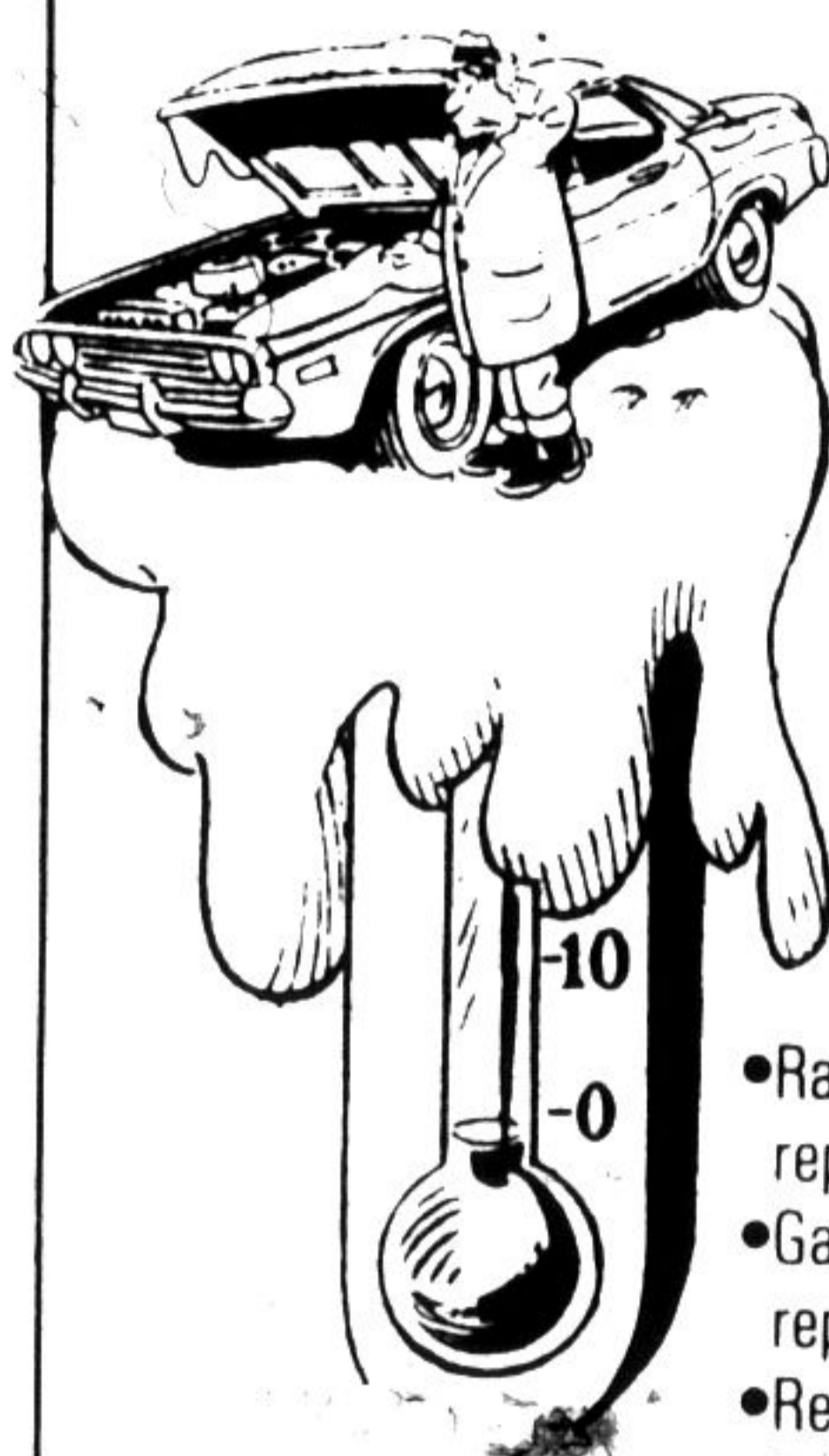
1. Snow shovel.
2. Sand bag: this serves two purposes. It will weight down the car for extra traction and you can use the sand under your driving wheels if you are stuck.
3. Tow chain or rope.
4. Bottle of gas line antifreeze.
5. Jumper cables.
6. Flashlight and flares.
7. Warm clothing: a toque or hooded parka, mitts and extra footwear.
8. First aid kit.
9. Emergency food pack and utensils to melt snow.
10. Matches (several booklets).
11. An old newspaper.
12. Several candles in a deep can.
13. Blanket or sleeping bag.
14. Food: hard chocolate, raisins, peanuts, dried fruit, instant soup, or other foods that keep well.

There are several auto survival kits on the market that include dehydrated foods, heat source and space blankets. These take up very little room and should be considered.

Your travel kit should be carried in the trunk of your car or if conditions are bad, keep it in the car's interior where it will be warm and handy.

Add your H.A.C. membership to all of this and you should be ever ready to face the battle of the blizzard this winter and in winters to come.

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