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# Car Care Council's Lauren Fix: It's wise to winterize your car

Lori Johnston

Experts recommend winterizing your vehicle to protect it against damage during the most frigid months of the year. The drop in temperatures can magnify existing problems, such as sluggish performance.

Author **Lauren Fix**, also known as "The Car Coach," is spokeswoman for the Car Care Council. The nonprofit **Car Care Council** promotes the benefits of regular car maintenance. Fix chatted with InsuranceQuotes.com about why you should winterize your wheels.

### Why do car owners need to winterize?

Your vehicle works a lot harder during the winter than other times of the year. When you put that key in the ignition and turn it, the battery has to wake up and the car has to wake up. If the car has any kind of problems, any component on your car has to work that much harder. Brakes work harder. Batteries work harder. If you have a small problem (such as trouble starting the engine), as it gets colder, it will be even more difficult. Batteries get damaged and destroyed when the weather gets cold.

Also, anything that has rubber in your car doesn't like to work in cold weather. It can crack and get destroyed.

### What's the worst thing you've seen happen to a car that is not winterized?

When you don't have the right engine oil, it can actually get solid on you. I've seen brake fluid turn to gelatin. That's really scary. There definitely is an amplification of problems when the weather gets cold.

### Is winterizing important if you live in an area that doesn't get snow?

The lower half of the country gets a lot of rain and some get ice. Think about the temperature changes. Your car is used to running in 90-degree weather. If the temperatures get colder ... your car will start acting funny. You can get this really weird smell. It may not start or may ride really rough.



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### **What are changes that car owners should make during the winter?**

Check and change the fluid levels. Switch to winter wiper blades if you don't have beam blades (the Car Care Council also recommends cold-weather washer fluid). About 90 percent of your driving decisions are based on visibility. If your headlights are dim, and it's snowing, you (won't see) that animal or that car. Those are critical things, in addition to tires and brakes. If you buy headlights, wiper blades and batteries at your local auto parts store, they will install them for you for free.

### **What does it cost to winterize?**

I've seen **winter packages** – wiper blades, headlights and a battery – for under \$100. Always look online to see what kind of discount you can get. Look on (discount sites such as) Groupon and LivingSocial. I compare local dealers; you can check AutoZone, Uni-Select and Auto Service Plus.

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