

Winter Car Care

December
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QUIZ: Road Reflex

Are you an experienced driver? Here are a few questions to put your know-how to the test.

1. When driving, what should you do if you pass a vehicle on a dimly lit road at night?

- A. Turn on your high beams
- B. Turn on your low beams
- C. Turn on your headlights

2. How can you prevent your car from skidding when driving over icy patches of road?

- A. Brake firmly
- B. Pump the brakes
- C. Gradually release the gas pedal

3. What should you do if your passengers are arguing or distracting you?

- A. Honk the horn to get their attention
- B. Turn up the radio so you can't hear them
- C. Pull over to the side of the road when it's safe to do so

4. When can you drive in the left lane on a highway?

- A. At any time
- B. When passing another vehicle
- C. Only if you're alone on the road

5. What should you never do when another vehicle is passing you?

- A. Slow down
- B. Maintain your speed
- C. Accelerate

6. What should you do if your passenger laughs at you for driving slowly?

- A. Laugh it off and maintain your speed
- B. Call them a fool
- C. Drive faster so they stop laughing

7. How can you avoid being blinded by the headlights of an oncoming vehicle at night?

- A. Look at the curb on the right side of the road
- B. Close your eyes momentarily
- C. Quickly blink several times



ANSWERS
1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-B, 5-C, 6-A, 7-A



How to prepare your car's sunroof for winter

Your sunroof probably won't get much use throughout the cold season. However, it's important to take the following steps to ensure it remains in good condition.

- Clean the glass and wipe down the gasket around the sunroof with a soft cloth, automotive cleaner and toothbrush.
- Clean the sunroof's slides and tracks and lubricate all moving parts with white lithium grease.

- Clear the sunroof trough with a canister of compressed air. Then, insert a skinny, flexible, non-puncturing wire into the drains to remove stubborn dirt and debris.
- Look for jagged edges or cracks along the sunroof's seal and assess the area for any accumulated water or mold. If you notice any leaks, promptly get them fixed before the cold weather sets in.



Over the winter, carefully brush or gloved hand. Don't remove snow and ice from use an ice scraper or hard-bristled brush. your sunroof using a soft

3 indispensable automotive inventions

Modern vehicles are more technologically advanced than ever before. However, some of the tech you take for granted didn't always exist. Here are three inventions that revolutionized the automotive industry.

1. Winter tires

Winter tires improve grip and handling on snowy and icy roads. The very first ones were invented in Finland in 1934. Designed by Nokian Tyres, they were initially intended for large transport trucks. However, two years later, they were adapted to passenger vehicles. Modern winter tires were invented in the 1970s.

2. Seat belts

Seat belts significantly reduce the risk of being killed or seriously injured in a car accident. The precursor to the seat belt can be traced back to a harness designed by an aeronautical expert in the early 19th century. However, the first patent for automobile seat belts was filed in 1885 by Nils Bohlin of Volvo.

The modern two-strap belt was introduced in 1959. In 1968, the federal government mandated that all new cars in the United States include seatbelts at all seating positions.

3. Windshield wipers

If you've driven in the rain, snow, mud or slush, you understand the importance of windshield wipers. This innovation was patented in 1903 by Mary Anderson, who designed a swing arm with a manually operated rubber blade. In 1917, Charlotte Bridgwood created the first electric wiper blades. Automatic wipers were patented in 1964 by Robert Kearns.

It goes without saying that driving would be a lot more difficult without these inventions.



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5 situations that require an auto inspection



It's important to have your vehicle regularly inspected to avoid unexpected breakdowns and fix small problems before they get out of hand. Here are five situations when an inspection is warranted.

1. Your vehicle's warranty is expiring. If the warranty on your car is due to expire soon, it's a good idea to bring it to a mechanic for an inspection. They'll complete any necessary repair work while it's still covered.
2. You're planning a road trip. An unexpected breakdown can put a damper on your road trip. To avoid unpleasant surprises and enjoy your vacation, have your vehicle inspected and repaired in advance.
3. You're shopping for a used car. Checking the mechanical condition of your future vehicle is a must. You'll find out what type of condition it's in and can negotiate a lower price if repairs are necessary.
4. Your lease is coming to an end. You may have to pay a hefty bill if the dealership determines your vehicle doesn't meet their repair standards. It's a good idea to have your car inspected a few months before the end of your lease so you can correct any lingering problems.
5. You're selling your vehicle. If you sell someone a defective car, you could be held liable for any

injuries they suffer as a result. It's best to schedule a full inspection before you post your ad. This will allow you to make the

necessary repairs, inform the buyer of any shortcomings and set the price accordingly.

Visit a mechanic near you for comprehensive service.

4 types of shoes you shouldn't wear while driving

Did you know that your choice of footwear can affect your safety behind the wheel? Here's an overview of four types of shoes you shouldn't wear while driving.

1. Wedges have thick soles that can prevent you from accurately feeling the gas and brake pedals. This can cause you to misjudge how much pressure you're applying.

2. Stilettos have sharply pointed heels that can get caught in the floor mat. The heels can also interfere with your ability to pivot your foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal.

3. Flip flops don't secure to your heel, which can interfere with braking and accelerating. They can also easily slip off and become stuck under a pedal.

4. Large boots restrict your ankle movement and can make it difficult to use the gas and brake pedals. Knee-high boots can also catch against the seat, affecting your reaction time.

A comfortable pair of flat walking shoes with thin, grippy soles offer the safest driving experience.



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4 tips for safely driving through a tunnel

If you need to drive through a tunnel, it's best to exercise caution. To make sure you arrive at your destination safely, follow these tips.

- 1. USE THE CORRECT LANE**
You're not allowed to change lanes while driving in a tunnel. Therefore, make sure you're in the correct one before entering.
- 2. TURN ON YOUR LOW BEAMS**
Your headlights will help you see inside the dark tunnel and ensure you're visible to other motorists.
- 3. REDUCE YOUR SPEED**
It can take a second for your eyes to adjust to the low light when en-

tering the tunnel and the glaring sun when exiting. Make sure you take it slow and always respect the speed limit.

- 4. KNOW THE DIMENSIONS OF YOUR VEHICLE**
Tunnels have different levels of clearance. Consequently, you should know the height of your vehicle, especially if you're driving a motorhome or moving truck. Don't forget to include the height of accessories like roof boxes and bike racks.

Finally, remember to never stop inside a tunnel unless there's an emergency.

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5 things to consider before driving abroad

Are you planning a trip abroad and thinking of renting a car while you're there? Follow these tips to ensure you're prepared.



1. **Driver's license.** Depending on your destination, you may need to get an International Driving Permit (IDP) to legally drive on the roads.
2. **Rules of the road.** Find out about speed limits, tolls and alcohol regulations in the country you're visiting. If you have to drive on the left-hand side, watch a few videos on the internet. This will help you anticipate the maneuvers you may need to make in the opposite direction, such as changing lanes and going through roundabouts.

3. **Signage.** You may have difficulty interpreting the road signs if you're not visiting an

English-speaking country. Do your research, so you know what to expect.

4. **Child car seats.** If you're traveling with young children, ask the car rental agency to provide you with car seats. Some American models don't meet the safety standards in every country.
5. **Insurance.** Determine if your insurance provides overseas coverage or if you need to purchase insurance through the car rental agency. Also, make sure you have sufficient liability coverage.

Visit travel.state.gov and talk to a travel agent for valuable advice. They'll tell you what to look out for and what type of vehicle is best for the region you're visiting. Have a good trip!

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Expert tips to protect your windshield all year round

Your car's windshield does more than let you see outside. It provides a significant amount of strength to the structural support in the cabin of the vehicle. Here are a few tips to keep it in good condition.

- Periodically wipe your windshield with a microfiber cloth. This will help keep the glass clean and prevent the wipers from spreading dirt around.
- Regularly clean your wiper blades with a soft cloth soaked in washer fluid to remove grease and dust.
- Replace your wiper blades as soon as they show signs of wear to prevent streaking.
- Maintain a safe following distance to reduce the risk of getting hit by stones.
- Warm up your car gradually. Avoid forcing hot air onto the windshield as the temperature difference between the outside and inside of the car could weaken the glass.
- Place a cardboard or anti-icing tarp over your windshield when the forecast predicts rain or cold weather.
- Don't use hot water to de-ice your windshield. The thermal shock can cause it to crack.
- Immediately repair chips or cracks in your windshield.
- Use a snow brush with a flexible Styrofoam edge. The bristles on traditional brushes can harbor debris that could



- scratch your windshield.
- Use a seasonal windshield washer fluid. For example, winter washer fluid won't

freeze and removes road salt, while summer washer fluid removes insects.

Visit a local autobody or glass repair shop to have your windshield inspected and repaired if necessary.



4 advantages of using a block heater

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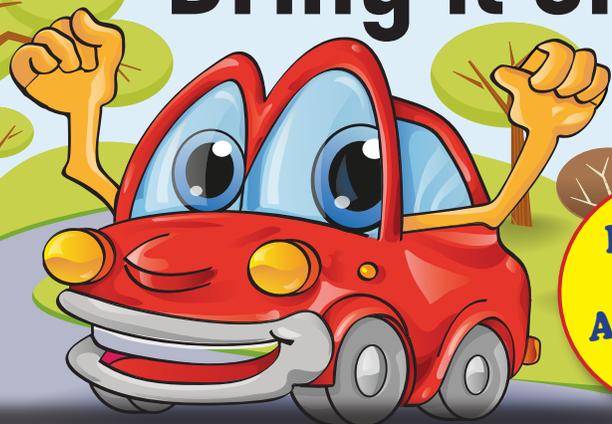
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If you can't park your car in a heated garage in winter, a block heater is a must-have. These devices preheat coolant and allow specific powertrain components to reach an optimal temperature before starting. Here are four additional benefits of using a block heater.

1. INCREASED COMFORT

When the coolant inside your vehicle is warm, the inside of your car heats up 40 percent faster. This also ensures your windows defrost quickly.

2. IMPROVED MECHANICAL PERFORMANCE

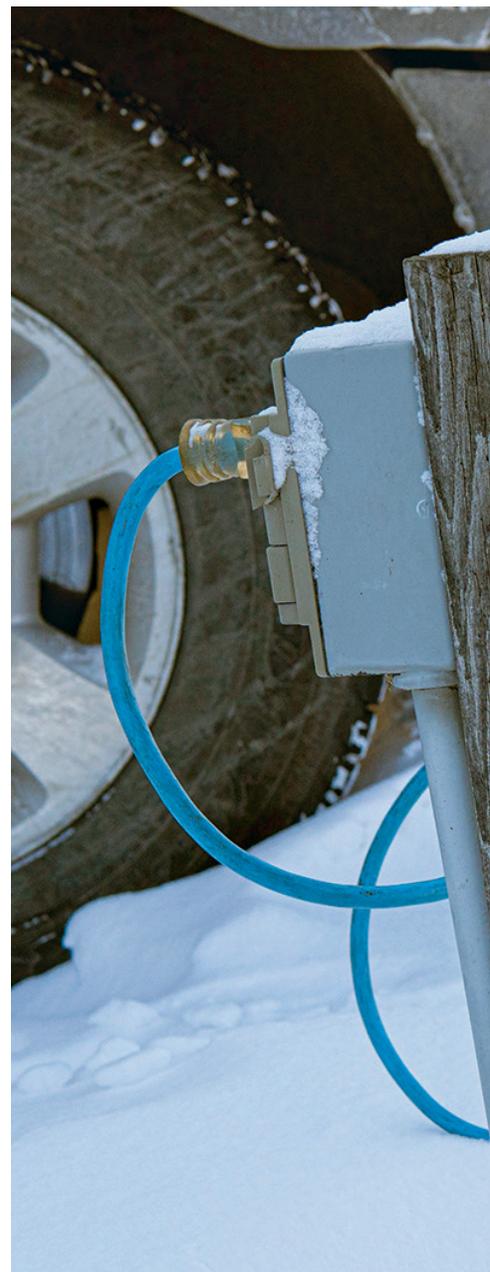
A block heater makes it easier to start your car when it's cold. Consequently, using one can help increase the lifespan of your ride. The battery, for example, doesn't have to use as much energy. Plus, combustion becomes much more efficient, meaning you won't have to change your oil as often.

3. FUEL SAVINGS

Vehicles connected to block heaters consume up to 15 percent less fuel during the first 12 miles of driving. This allows you to save at the gas pump

4. REDUCED EMISSIONS

Warming up your engine minimizes exhaust emissions produced when you start your vehicle. Using a block heater is also much less polluting than idling. However, to avoid wasting electricity, you should plug in your car no more than three to four hours before driving. Your engine won't get any warmer after this point.



If your car doesn't have a block heater, you can install an aftermarket model on almost any vehicle. Ask your mechanic about the various options.

How to prepare for winter storms

Winter arrives with fanfare as Christmas, Chanukah and New Year's Eve all take place within days of the first day of the season. Parties and shopping may distract people from the weather around them, but after resolutions are made and the decorations are packed away, it's not long before it's time to confront winter's wrath.

Storms are commonplace in January and February in many parts of the world, and even March storms are not unheard of. Knowing how to prepare for storms can keep people safer and prevent home damage. If a storm is forecasted, follow these guidelines.

- Charge a mobile phone and other electronic devices to full battery in advance of the storm in case power goes out.
- Stock the home with extra batteries for flashlights and battery-powered devices, such as a portable radio.
- Invest in a car charger to charge devices if the power is out for some time.
- Keep a supply of canned or boxed nonperishable items, as well as convenience foods that do not need to be cooked, like granola bars.
- Periodically check to ensure that the first aid kit is stocked with items that have not expired.
- Refill medications so that they are on hand in the event weather makes it challenging to get to the store.



- Keep emergency supplies of bottled water. If you forget this, fill the bathtub up with fresh water. Extra water will be needed for toilet flushing if yours is a septic system.
- Have warm blankets on hand and sleeping bags for each person in the home.
- Unplug all electronic devices if the power goes out to protect against a surge and damage when the power is restored.

- Exercise caution when burning candles, opting for flashlights and lanterns instead.
- If it's very cold outside, move refrigerated and frozen items outdoors so they do not spoil in an unpowered refrigerator.
- Do not use gas stoves, charcoal grills or other open-flame heat sources for warmth indoors. Carbon monoxide gas can build up inside and prove deadly.
- Follow the manufacturer's

instructions when using a backup generator for power.

- Stock up on gasoline for vehicles and to power gas-driven generators.
- Use power company websites and apps to report outages and stay apprised of restoration status.
- Be cautious of downed power lines in the area when driving or walking.

Winter storms can be beautiful but dangerous without ample preparation.



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