

January  
2017

# WINTER CAR CARE



A Special Supplement To  
The Morning Journal

## Birmingham Automotive

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Inventory Arriving  
Weekly

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- Coding System Repair
- Wheel Bearings
- Air Conditioning Repair

- Engine Replacement
- Trans Replacement
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- Alignments
- Exhaust Repair

\*All Service Specials based on most vehicles. Excludes HD trucks, diesels, synthetics & some imports. Taxes & shop fees extra. Prices are subject to change. Shuttle Service Good for up to 10 mile Radius. See dealer for details.



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## What to do after being involved in a car accident

### Metro Creative

Car accidents happen every day, and rare is the experienced driver who has not been involved in at least one accident during his or her time behind the wheel. Drivers or passengers who have been involved in previous accidents may react calmly when involved in another accident, but the experience of being in a car accident can be shocking to those people who have never before been involved in a car crash.

According to the World Health Organization, there were 1.25 million road traffic deaths across the globe in 2013. But not every traffic accident involves

a fatality, and many are minor incidents in which all involved parties walk away unharmed. Unfortunately, all traffic accidents, however minor they may be, have financial ramifications, and it's in drivers' and passengers' best interest to familiarize themselves with the right way to respond to traffic accidents should they find themselves in a crash.

• **Dial emergency services.** After pulling over and out of traffic, drivers and passengers involved in traffic accidents should dial 9-1-1 emergency services. If drivers are incapable of pulling onto the shoulder or out of the way of oncoming traffic, immediately put on the vehicle's hazard

lights and dial 9-1-1. Enlisting the help of emergency services like 9-1-1, even when no one appears to be injured and no vehicles seem to be damaged, is necessary because the presence of a neutral third party like a police officer or emergency medical technician can be helpful should the accident ultimately lead to legal action.

• **Exchange insurance information.** After each driver has pulled over and is out of harm's way, attempt to exchange insurance information. If you lost your insurance card or can't find it in your vehicle, don't panic. Simply use your mobile phone to call your insurance company and get your policy

number. Police may let you off the hook if you can provide proof of insurance, even if you don't have any such proof in your vehicle. If the other driver appears irate and/or confrontational, wait until the police arrive to exchange insurance information and do your best to avoid this person.

• **Obtain a police report.** Police reports are vital, even when accidents are minor. Insurance companies may not pay damages if no police report has been filed and the involved parties have differing accounts of the accident. And drivers' premiums may increase if they are involved in an accident in which no one is deemed at-fault. Always protect yourself after a traffic

accident by calling the police and obtaining their official report of the incident. Also, ask the responding officer if you are required by law to report the accident to the local motor vehicle agency. Some areas require this, while others do not.

• **Take photos.** If you have a smartphone or camera on hand, take as many photos of the accident as you can without risking your safety. Time-stamped photos may help you should a lawsuit or other legal action be taken in the future. Car accidents can be scary, and knowing how to respond to accidents can help drivers and passengers make the best of unfortunate situations.

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## Prepare vehicles for harsh weather

**A**s the seasons change, motorists must take steps to safeguard their vehicles, especially when the season changes from fall to winter. Each winter, many vehicles are subjected to sub-zero temperatures, snowfall and icy roads, and such conditions can take their toll on vehicles over time. Taking steps to prepare vehicles for winter weather is a vital step that can make cars and trucks safer for drivers and their passengers.

### Battery

Old batteries should be replaced before winter begins. Without a strong, properly functioning battery, engines cannot turn over. Most batteries

last between three and five years. However, extreme cold can compromise batteries, especially those that have been around awhile. Batteries are made up of acid and water, and cold temperatures can freeze the water, thereby affecting battery performance. According to AAA's Automotive Research Center, at 32 F, the average battery loses 35 percent of its strength.

Newer batteries can be protected by starting the vehicle each day to warm up and recharge the battery. Let the car run for at least 10 minutes if you cannot take an extended drive.

### Exterior maintenance

Keeping a car waxed and sealed can help maintain a

durable exterior finish. This includes not only the paint, but the rubber and vinyl parts of the car's exterior. Winter is a good time to switch to a heavy-duty synthetic wax that can shield against water and road salts. High-quality sealants can be used on bumpers, trim and rubber door seals as added protection. Speak with an automotive retailer or even the car dealership if you are unsure which products will make your car's parts most durable for winter weather. Do not stop washing your car just because the weather is cold. Slushy, wet roads and snow-melting salts can speed up the formation of rust or other decay on the undercarriage of the vehicle. These materials will need to

be periodically cleaned off. Flush the underside of the vehicle whenever possible, taking advantage of any dry, slightly warmer days.

### Tire pressure

According to the automotive retailer Pep Boys, vehicle tires lose a pound of air pressure for every 10-degree drop in temperature. Many modern cars will alert to changes in air pressure, and drivers should be diligent in maintaining the proper tire pressure. Fuel economy as well as handling ability can decline when tires are not inflated properly. Tires can be refilled at many gas stations for little cost.

### Wipers

Visibility is key in hazardous weather conditions, and keeping the windshield clean

is a priority. This means ensuring there is enough windshield wiper fluid in the car and that it is a product that will not freeze.

Wiper blades can freeze and crack in the winter. Older blades may be more susceptible to damage. It's a worthy investment to replace existing wiper blades at the start of each winter. When vehicles are parked, pull the wipers off of the windshield to safeguard them from sticking and cracking. Cold weather requires drivers to amp up their vehicle maintenance routines. Consult with a mechanic or automotive retailer for more ideas and products that can help your vehicles operate safely and efficiently this winter.

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