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**IT'S
HERE!!**

Thanks, poets, for being so cheery. Everyone knows that winter is coming and bringing with it potential problems for anyone who drives an automobile.

Not only is it the season hardest on automobiles but it is also the season when automobiles are most necessary. In summer, you may tell the Little Leaguer to walk home after baseball practice. But in winter, you'd probably pick him up at the gym after he's practiced basketball.

And it's very hard to forgive a car that stalls or breaks down in winter. In summer, it's a nuisance to change a tire or hike to the nearest telephone. But in winter the same problem can give a motorist a feeling of kinship with those who explore the South Pole.

It is more than ice, snow and cold weather that make winter driving different than summer driving. The most obvious difference is that you drive in the dark more in winter. The hours of daylight lessen each day until the 21st of December. By then it can be very dark indeed by 5:30 or 6 p.m., especially on an overcast day.

Another difference is that traffic is heavier--and slower--in metropolitan areas in winter. There are several reasons. There is more business activity, more social and community activities around the holidays. You may not drive as many miles in winter as you do during the summer, but the slow, stop-and-go driving is harder on your car than warm-weather open-road cruising.

In addition, there are many minor annoyances. The ever-present salt spray flying at your windshield. The chunks of slush that accumulate under your fenders. The stalled car in the intersection that you must worm your way around.

All these add up to frustrations for the motorist. Nothing much can be done about winter's poor driving conditions. But the biggest frustration of all, a balky car, is one that can largely be averted by means of a little foresight.

The first thing to do in getting a car ready for winter is to get rid of the effects of summer. This means changing the oil, the oil filter and the air filter. Don't neglect the latter. Late summer is often a dusty time of year

"And after summer evermore succeeds
Barren winter, with his wrathful
nipping cold:
--Shakespeare

"Every mile is two in winter
--George Herbert

and a new air filter will let your car breathe easy again.

If your car has a history of hard starting in winter, perhaps you'll want to use a lighter oil--say 10W--for winter. A significant part of starting troubles are created by the fact that oil stiffens at low temperatures. This means that your engine is much harder for the starter to turn over.

Summer's heat is hard on tires. Before winter comes, have them checked for wear, and especially for uneven wear. If wear is more apparent along one edge than the other, then the wheel is out of line. If there are intermittent worn spots around the circumference of the tread, the wheel is out of balance.

Even without such obvious clues, it's a good idea to have your wheels checked for alignment and balance. Nipping such problems in an early stage can save you the cost of a new tire.

Think back about your summer driving. Did you do any mountain driving? Did you haul unusual loads? Did you pull a trailer? If so, you'd better have your brakes checked. And most certainly have them checked if your car's mileage is around the 20- to 25,000-mile mark.

If your brakes have the slightest tendency to pull to one side, you should have them corrected immediately. This problem is bad enough on dry pavement. On a slippery road, it can be fatal.

Another imperative in preparing your car for winter is to have the exhaust system checked. If your car isn't air-conditioned, you probably did most of your summer driving with the windows down. Sometime during the summer, exhaust gases could have begun leaking into the passenger space without your knowing it.

Then, when winter comes and you begin driving with most of your windows closed--tragedy. Although a car exhaust has a distinctive odor, the fatal ingredient, carbon monoxide, is both odorless and tasteless.

Even a trickle of carbon monoxide into the interior of a car can produce drowsiness. Indeed, that is the only symptom that carbon monoxide poisoning does produce. Safety experts suspect that carbon monoxide poisoning is to blame for many single-car run-off-the-road accidents that can't be otherwise explained.

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