



**CHELAN FIRE and RESCUE**  
232 East Wapato  
Chelan, WA 98816  
[www.chelan7.com](http://www.chelan7.com)

**509-682-4476**

## How to Winterize Your Car

Climate changes don't affect just you – they also affect your car. In regions that don't enjoy mild winters, you wouldn't dream of heading outside without a heavy coat if the wind chill brought the temperature below freezing. Don't expect your car to function properly without some attention to its winter needs, too. ([www.dmv.org](http://www.dmv.org))



### Engine Oil in the Winter:

The oil in your engine changes depending on how hot or cold the engine is running. Because the outside temperatures will influence the internal temperature of your engine, you need to make sure you're using the proper oil for the conditions.

During the winter months, if you live where temperatures get below freezing, you'll want to switch over to thinner-less viscous-oil. If you run a 10W-30W in the summer, for example, try moving to a 5W-30W when changing your oil in the fall or winter. If you are in doubt, refer to your manual or manufacturer.

### Engine Coolant:

Your car's coolant system is not intended only to keep your engine from overheating. It is also responsible for protecting your valuable engine against corrosion. Before the weather gets too cold, make sure you are using coolant with ethylene glycol to help protect your engine.

Every vehicle requires a certain ratio of coolant to water, and your owner's manual or repair technician can explain what your engine needs.

### Windshield Treatment:

For best results in clearing off cold, heavy grime, select a washer fluid with an antifreeze solution. But beware-some washer fluids can be harsh & damage your car's paint.

### Snow Tires:

When it comes to really dealing with winter weather, your tires are out there mixing with the snow, sleet & ice.

Mounting the right tires on your car or truck can give you an advantage when trekking through snow. Many car makers & tire manufacturers recommend changing all four tires to snow tires in the winter. If you live off the beaten path, you can even buy snow tires with studs to help you get where you're going all winter long. When spring comes, though, you'll be glad to get out of the heavy winter tires because your fuel efficiency & handling will improve with a less aggressive tire. Another option is all-season tires that you drive year-round. The advantage of all-season tires is that you don't change the tires before winter or need to keep two sets of rims. The disadvantage is that you don't get all the great features of a specialized seasonal tire.

### Cold Weather & Battery Capacity:

Your battery capacity is reduced by the cold weather. A thorough inspection of your battery, cables, terminals and fluid will help you make sure your car is ready for the winter.

Check over battery cables for cracks & breaks. The terminals should fit snugly with no loose connections. You can check your battery fluid by uncovering the refill hole. If the level is below the bottom of the cap, refill with distilled water.

To read the level of charge in your battery, you will need to turn the engine off. Some batteries have a built-in hydrometer eye that tells you the amount of voltage remaining in the battery. A handheld hydrometer can be used to collect the same information.

While you're inspecting your battery, look for the manufacture date. Knowing how old your battery is can clue you in on when it will begin to lose charge.

### Frozen Out:

Door locks can freeze in cold weather & break your key if you try to force them open. The old fashion cure was warm water, but what if you're not at home & don't have warm water nearby. Discount stores, auto parts stores, and even hardware stores sell glycerine you can use for de-icing.

Stock a tube at home in the garage & maybe in your desk at work. That way whenever your locks freeze up, you'll be able to solve the problem.

### Emergency Kit:

Consider putting together a few basics for an emergency kit to keep in the trunk of your car. You will also want to be sure your spare tire is in good shape with all the tools to change it out. A few other ideas for an emergency kit could be:

Flares	Washer Fluid
Blankets	Coolant
Boots	Flashlight
Radio	
Engine Oil	