

Hey Luke, can I winterize my car on my own or is that something I should let a shop take care of?

-Theo on the Island

You most certainly can winterize on your own. It all depends on your comfort with car maintenance along with how much time you have. For some, it's more convenient to schedule a time with their local auto repair shop. By taking your car through a winterization checklist, it will help keep you safe on the road when the snow, ice and cold arrives.

So what are some ways you can make sure your vehicle is ready for winter? Let's take a look.



### **Windshield Wipers**

When it's winter, your wipers get a workout. Between the flurries, the hard snows, the slush that gets kicked up and that film of filth that seems to cake your window to the road ahead, your windshield wipers are essential to make it through the season. Make sure your wipers are in working order, free from cracks and rips along the wiper blade. If they're leaving streaks on your windshield, that's a good sign they may be worn out. Replacing them would be a good idea since

you need to see where you're going.

### **Check Your Fluids**

Fluids are vital to keep your vehicle running in peak condition no matter the season. Checking those fluids can help ensure your vehicle is ready for freezing temps. Your coolant, oil and transmission fluid may need to be topped off or changed - this is where a local auto mechanic can help if you're not familiar with the process. You should also check your windshield wiper fluid since those wipers are going to be busy. Some wiper fluids are rated to still work when the temps dip well below freezing.

### **Check Your Tires**

Some drivers used a dedicated set of winter tires. But if you're like a lot of people, you stick with one set of all season tires year round. No matter what tires you use during the winter season, it's important to give them a preseason check.

Worn and bald tires can be disastrous when the roads get slick. That's why it's important to check the tread on your current tires before winter crud starts to cake the roads. Some people do the penny test to check the tread on their tires. This is a basic way to check the tread without fancy tools. Grab a penny, place in the tread groove with Lincoln's head going in first. If you can see the top of Abe's head, your tread may be too shallow and your tires may need replacing. Repeat this on all four tires. If you need new tires or want to explore winter tire options, give us a call at Luke's Auto Repair

### **Test Your Tire Pressure**

In addition to making sure the tread on your tires are winter ready, you're also going to want to keep an eye on your tire pressure. If the pressure becomes too low, your will wear uneven and it could lead to a flat. Temperature swings that happen throughout winter can cause deflation in your tires. Properly inflated tires ensure proper grip. So check the pressure in your tires often and fill as needed.



### **Battery, Belts and Hoses**

Your battery needs more juice to start your vehicle when it's cold out. As your battery gets older, it's not as effective in getting your car started. So if you have an older battery, you may want to have it tested so see if it needs replacing. Also under your hood, belts and hoses should be checked too. Cracks and tears can happen over time. When it's cold out the chance of damage can increase. Again, if you need a trusted auto mechanic to do this, that's what we're here for.

### **Prepare a Winter Safety Kit**

Not only do you want to keep your car safe, but it's important to keep yourself and your passengers safe too. One way to do this is with a winter safety kit. A proper kit that lives in your car can be a lifesaver. Gather the basics like extra winter hats, gloves, blankets snacks. Some people will also pack flashlights, kitty litter and a foldable shovel for getting unstuck, jumper cables, a first aid kit and snacks.

We hope both you and your vehicle are ready for winter. If you'd rather have a professional take a look or if you'd like to save some time, schedule an appointment for winterization at [Luke's Auto Repair](#) in Onalaska. Winter will be here before we all know it, time to go dig those boots out of the closet.