

Getting Your Car Ready for Holiday Travel

Hundreds of families will travel by automobile during the holiday and preparing for the trip is essential to a safe journey.

The American Automobile Association says it responds to almost 7.4 million breakdowns during holidays. Making preparations to be prepared for a roadside break down is essential to a good trip.

Colony One is there to help you get your automobile ready for holiday travel. Here are some tips from **Colony One** to insure you are prepared.

The most important thing is to take care of the basics. That means check your oil, fluids, and tire pressure. If you drive a long distance when any are low, you're asking for trouble.

- **Check the car's heater and defroster.** Making sure the vents are not clogged and that they'll put out warm air when needed.

- **Get the right kind of oil change.** Are you approaching the time for a 30,000-mile full service for your vehicle? If so, don't procrastinate! Among other things, the service should include an oil change, and the oil used should have the right viscosity, or thickness, for your vehicle at this time of year. Oil tends to thicken as it gets colder, and if it's too thick it won't do the best job of keeping your engine lubricated. Check your owner's manual for guidance about which oil to use in different climates and temperatures.

- **Make sure you can see.** When's the last time you replaced your windshield wiper blades? They usually work effectively for about one year, so be sure to invest in some new ones if you're due. Here's another important step to take before you find yourself struggling to see in a blinding storm: Fill up your windshield washer reservoir with windshield washer fluid.

(Plain water won't do the trick at this time of year because it freezes.) Also check to see that your heater and defroster are working properly so you can keep the windshield nice and clear.

- **Give your battery a little TLC.** This is an ideal time of year to make sure your battery's posts and connections are corrosion-free and that your battery has all the water it needs. If your battery is more than three years old, have a certified repair shop test its ability to hold a charge. Granted, you might be able to find a Good Samaritan to help you jump-start your vehicle in the middle of a blizzard — but wouldn't you rather avoid such a scenario altogether?

- **Examine your belts and hoses.** When you have that full service done on your vehicle, make sure the belts and hoses get checked for wear and tear — even if you're driving a modern car. Cold weather can do a number on belts and hoses, so they deserve attention.

- **Check your tire pressure.** Your tires must be properly inflated to ensure you'll have the best possible traction as you drive along, and traction is often severely jeopardized in wet, snowy or icy conditions. The air pressure in your tires has likely dropped as the weather has gotten colder, so it's important to see where things stand now. (You can generally expect that you'll lose 1 pound per square inch whenever the temperature drops by 10 degrees Fahrenheit.) Again, your trusty owner's manual will tell you what your target tire pressure should be.

Come see us before you hit the road for the coming holidays at 1131 Dulles Ave., Stafford, TX 77477, across from Riverbend Country Club, 281-908-4000. Check our website at colonyoneauto.com.