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## Car Care Articles

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### Santa Tunes up His Sleigh Before the Big Night

Santa drives a state-of-the-art high-performance, high technology vehicle that most drivers could only imagine. But even Santa knows the importance of vehicle maintenance.

"The holidays are a busy time and it's hard to squeeze even one more thing in your schedule," says Santa Claus, also known as Kris Kringle. "Between making the list, checking it twice, making the toys, organizing the toy distribution and charting a 'flight' path, it can get pretty hectic. But I always follow the advice of Car Care Canada by making sure that my vehicle is ready for my all important road trip on December 24. The boys and girls are counting on me, I can't afford for the sleigh to break down, it would break too many hearts."



"If you're planning an extended road trip to visit family or friends over the holiday season make sure you're safe by ensuring your vehicle is up for the challenge of winter travel," says Car Care Canada Vice President Marc Brazeau.

The penalties of procrastinating on vehicle maintenance range from a heater that runs cold to a battery that won't start the car to a chip that leads to a crack in the windshield and reduces visibility.

If you maintain your vehicle regularly you should be fine, but if you haven't been practicing regularly scheduled service as outlined in your owners vehicle, scheduling that service now may help you from being stranded on the side of the road late at night or when automotive service repair facilities are closed down for the holidays. An early visit to your repair facility may actually save you money in the long run too. It costs very little to fix a chip in your windshield, but it can cost upwards of \$250 to replace the windshield.



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Car Care Canada offers the following checklist:

### **Engine performance**

A poorly maintained engine is hard to start in cold weather, if it starts at all. It may run rough and lose power. Have fuel, ignition and emission control systems checked, necessary components replaced and adjustments made.

### **Battery and electrical system**

How old is your battery? If it's three or more years old, it should be tested and replaced if necessary. Even a strong battery that can deliver full power at 27 degrees celsius will have dropped to 65 percent of its output at freezing temperature and less than that with below zero temperatures. Clean and tighten battery terminals, as loose or corroded connections can cause symptoms of a weak or dead battery.

### **Oil and filter**

Change both as recommended in the owner's manual, generally at 5,000 km intervals for severe conditions and cold weather operation, especially when most driving is stop-and-go traffic. Check the owner's manual for more information on severe service.

### **Visibility**

Replace old wiper blades and be sure your washers are working. Carry spare washer fluid in your vehicle. Make sure all chips in the windshield are repaired. Small chips can turn in to dangerous cracks with the extremes of cold temperatures and extended heater and defroster use in the car.

### **Cooling system**

A vehicle's antifreeze should be changed annually, or as recommended in the owner's manual. Flush the cooling system every 24 months. The recommended mixture is 50/50 antifreeze and distilled water. Have the system pressure tested for leaks and check hoses and drive belt(s) for tension and condition.

### **Tires**

Inspect, balance, check inflation and rotate tires. Check inflation on the spare and make sure the jack is in place. Car Care Canada recommends winter tires for maximum adherence to icy road conditions.

### **Lights**

Check all lights and replace burned out bulbs

### **Exhaust System**

Have the vehicle put on a lift for an inspection of the exhaust system. Leaking exhaust fumes can be deadly.

### **Emergency Kit**



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Be prepared for an emergency with the following items in your trunk: ice scraper, windshield de-icer, flashlight, whisk broom, blanket, extra clothes, candle/matches, bottled water, snacks, necessary medications and a first-aid kit.

Even the most meticulously maintained vehicle can be unsafe on the road during severe weather conditions. Check the weather reports before you leave on your trip. Remember, the best gift your family and friends can receive is news that you are safe and sound during severe weather such as a snow storm. If the weather gets really bad, find the nearest hotel.