

Consumer Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Reminds Consumers to Prepare Your Vehicle for the Winter

November is the perfect time of the year to pay special attention to your vehicle and get it ready for the winter. "Consumers should take a proactive approach to vehicle maintenance before the temperature drops. A few simple steps can ensure safety and reliability during the winter months," said Cynthia Sich, Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs.

Tips to Keep Your Car Running and Your Family Safe

- Wiper blades should be replaced if they are dry and cracked, and keep the washer fluid filled. Don't use your wipers to remove ice from the windshield; keep an ice scraper in the car for frosty mornings.
- Inspect your tires for uneven tread wear which can cause poor traction. During winter, tire pressure should be checked weekly.
- Check hoses and belts for cracks, soft spots or bulges. If you see a problem, have the hose or belt replaced.
- Make sure your cooling system is working efficiently. Flush and refill the radiator according to the manufacturer's specifications. As a general rule of thumb, this should be done every two years.
- Have your battery tested, especially if it's near the end of its warranty. Make sure the cables are clean and free of corrosion, cracks and dirt.
- Let the car fully warm up. Remember, revving the engine excessively when it is cold won't warm it up any faster than just letting it idle normally.
- Make sure you use the right engine oil. Oil thickens when it is cold making it harder for the engine to turn over; make sure to use one recommended by the manufacturer in your car owner manual.
- Keep the gas tank at least half full at all times to avoid gas line freeze-up.

You should carry a winter safety kit which includes battery jumper cables, a flashlight with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a blanket and warm clothing, a basic tool kit, highway safety flares, bottled water and non-perishable food, a shovel, and a bag of sand or old house shingles to give needed traction.