

Winter Weather Windshield Advisory

Many car owners make special preparations with the advance of winter's colder temperatures and extreme weather conditions. They equip their cars with snow tires, make sure their car's antifreeze is topped off, and might even buy special winter windshield wiper blades. But what about your windshield?

The windshield is a critical component of a car's safety system and needs extra attention during harsh winter months when extreme variations in temperature can make existing damage more severe. Rick Robertson, vice president of Auto Glass of Indiana, offers some tips to protect your car's glass in winter weather

"Make sure you have any existing chips in the windshield repaired as soon as possible," suggests Robertson, "preferably before cold weather becomes a factor. By repairing a chip early, you not only restore the structural integrity of the windshield's glass, you also prevent the chip from turning into a crack, which may require a windshield replacement."

In addition to safety, windshield repair is also a cost-saving option, as most insurance companies will waive the deductible for policyholders with comprehensive coverage.

"Most chips can be inexpensively repaired, depending on their location and severity, but larger ones and ones in the acute vision area mean a windshield must be replaced." The acute vision area is the area on the windshield above the steering wheel that can be covered by an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper. Inspection laws governing windshield repair vary from state to state, so Robertson suggests checking with a certified windshield repair and replacement specialist, where staff and technicians can advise you on repair regulations in your state.

If your windshield has damage when a cold spell hits, turning your cold car's heat and fan settings to their maximum can be bad news, says Robertson. The extreme temperature difference of heated air from your car's defroster hitting cold, air-temperature glass can cause any existing chips to worsen and potentially end up as cracks. "By gradually warming your car and the air inside, you reduce the probability of causing further damage to your windshield," he said.

Robertson says he has also seen car owners defrost their car's glass with hot water. "As tempting as it might be on a frosty winter morning, using hot water left over from morning tea to melt the ice and snow on your car's glass can also turn repairable chips into costly cracks."

The use of a car cover can help protect your car from a myriad of harmful factors such as sunlight, acid rain, fallen branches, etc. However, if you do not use the cover properly, you may risk the chance of damaging your vehicle rather than protecting it.

Most car covers are used to shield your car from the outdoor elements but some people use them indoors as well to protect against dust. There are three basic types of car covers: water proof, water resistant and non-water resistant. Each of these covers has advantages and disadvantages.

Waterproof car covers are usually made of plastic or a plastic coated fabric. They help keep the rain off your car but can also trap condensation between the cover and your vehicle. This trapped moisture may damage your paint more than if you had left your car unprotected.

Water resistant covers come in a wide array of fabrics and weights. Most of these covers will keep the water away as well as prevent condensation. In addition, most of those covers will prevent damage from sunlight and other elements.

The third major type of car cover is made of cotton or a cotton/poly blend. These types of covers are not water resistant and are best if used indoors.

Proper fit is important when selecting a car cover. A cover that does not fit correctly may be more damaging to the vehicle than no cover at all. If the cover is loose, it may flap against the vehicle causing scratching. The best solution is to order a custom-fitted cover for your car based on the make and year of the vehicle.

Extreme care should be taken when installing or removing a car cover. When removing the cover, make sure the cover is not hooked under the car and roll the cover up without moving the car if possible. By doing it this way, you have minimized the possible scratching of the car as you remove it. To place the cover on the vehicle, just reverse the process and unroll along the car and fold down the sides. It is best to install a cover onto a clean vehicle. If the car is not clean, the dirt trapped between the paint and the cover can also cause scratches as the cover is installed or removed.

By researching the different types of car covers and selecting a car cover that fits your car properly, you can help protect your vehicle from the elements while protecting what most people consider their second biggest investment.



Taking proper care of your windshield in harsh winter weather can prevent repairable chips from turning into costly cracks.

Winter Weather Windshield Dos and Don'ts

DO have chips in your windshield repaired before cold weather hits.

DO gradually warm your car up in cold weather to prevent making chips in the windshield worsen to cracks.

DO let your car's defroster partially thaw ice before using a scraper on your windshield.

DO take your car to a certified windshield repair professional like a PPG PROSTARS shop to get chips repaired.

DO ask your certified windshield repair specialist about your state's regulations on windshield repair and replacement.

DON'T turn your cold car's heat and fan settings to maximum in freezing temperatures.

DON'T use hot water to defrost your car's windshield.

DON'T chop or stab at icy patches while using an ice scraper on your windshield.



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