

# October is Fall Car Care Month

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It's here. The evenings are getting darker, and the colors are changing on the trees. The weather is cooler; people are digging in their closets for long-sleeve shirts and heading to their favorite coffee shops more frequently to keep warm. That's right — it's fall.

One more item that should be added to the fall "checklist" is getting vehicles prepared for the winter months ahead. Since this is so important, the National Car Care Council delegated October as Fall Car Care Month.

The Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association (AAIA) started the "Be Car Care Aware" Campaign in 2003. Since the group had designated April as National Car Care Month, they chose October as a follow-up for getting consumers' vehicles ready for the winter months.

There are several things the Car Care Council recommends doing for your customers' vehicles.

First of all, check the coolant/anti-freeze; the coolant should be flushed and refilled every two years in most vehicles. Then there is the usual oil change that should be performed every 3,000 miles, but drivers might consider switching to "winter weight" oil or a full synthetic if they live in a cold climate.

Another important thing is to recommend that drivers keep their gas tanks full. This decreases the chances of moisture forming in the gas lines and possibly freezing.

Be sure and check the exterior of the car as well. Tire tread depth and tire pressure should be checked regularly. Tires with worn tread are

at greater risk of losing traction on wet or snowy roads. If drivers live in an extremely cold climate, make sure their tires are durable; they may consider getting a special kind of tire for snowy and icy roads.

The lights should be checked too. Make sure the bulbs are illuminated and aiming in the correct direction. And as for wiper blades, check that they are working properly. In colder climates, drivers may want to get special snow blades.



The Car Care Council now has a CD and DVD that lube operators can purchase if they would like to host their own vehicle check-up event during National or Fall Car Care Month.

It's also not too late to order the Car Care Council's "Car Care Guide." This comprehensive booklet details the maintenance, service and repair procedures drivers should have performed on their vehicles — and why.

New sections on Fuel Economy and Environmental Awareness have been added to the "Car Care Guide" to show consumers how to get better gas mileage and make their vehicles environmentally friendly.

The Fuel Economy section covers the parts of the car that need proper maintenance in order to maximize efficiency and save money at the pump. It recommends typical service intervals and includes questions to ask automotive technicians.

The section on Environmental Awareness explains how motorists can do their part to protect the en-

vironment in terms of driving habits and vehicle maintenance. This section has tips on Driving Green and lists the components of a vehicle that should be routinely checked to make sure a car's performance is as environmentally friendly as possible.

"The new sections are designed to help people better understand that the amount of gas they use is directly related to how they maintain and drive their vehicle," said Rich White, executive director of the Car Care Council. "With Fall Car Care Month right around the corner, now is the time to order copies of the new Car Care Guide for your customers. The guide is a popular consumer giveaway at shops."

The Car Care Guide uses easy-to-understand everyday language, instead of technical automotive jargon, and fits easily in a glove box. The guide covers the most common preventative maintenance occasions and procedures that need to be performed to keep cars safe, dependable and efficient. It also includes descriptions of 12 major vehicle systems and parts, and a list of questions to ask when maintenance or repair procedures are being done on a car. A Car Care Checklist reminds motorists what vehicle systems need to be maintained and when service or repair should be performed.

The Car Care Council, a creation of AAIA, is the source of information for the "Be Car Care Aware" consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers. ♦

For more information on getting involved in Fall Car Care Month, visit: [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org)