

Simple Stuff

Warming Your Car

by Bob Vitrikas

As we head into the cold weather here in the northern hemisphere, I thought it would be helpful to give a nod to how to properly warm up your car. Seems pretty simple, eh?

Many folks begin their morning commute by starting their cars while they enjoy a cup of coffee. With the introduction of remote starting it is even more convenient. This delay in actually driving the car can be harmful to the mechanicals. A cold carbureted engine needs to be choked which results in a richer than normal mixture in order for the engine to run. This excess fuel can contaminate the engine oil resulting in damage to the bearings etc. Modern fuel injected engines have a computer to adjust the fuel mixture when cold, so this problem is lessened but still present. Additionally, every internal combustion engine generates up to two quarts of water following a cold start. On a frosty morning did you ever notice the water dripping out of the exhaust pipe of the car in front of you sitting in traffic? And the steam coming out of the tailpipe? Imagine the harm two quarts of water does to your engine internal metal parts and the exhaust system.

To best preserve your expensive running gear, experts recommend starting the car, waiting 30-60 seconds to let the oil circulate and then drive gently until the engine water temperature gauge comes up to its normal operating range. This speeds up the warming up process and gets that nasty water out of the system. Now you know. Pretty simple huh? Take it easy folks!

P.S. If you drive an electric or steam powered vehicle, please disregard all the above.