

WINTER CAR STORAGE TIPS

As most of you probably pack your favorite VW away for the winter, the following winter car storage tips can be used to maintain the integrity of your car and minimize any damage from improper storage. These tips can be used for both air-cooled and water cooled VW's

1. Store your car with a full tank of fresh gas to minimize condensation of water. But before you fill the fuel tank up, add some gas stabilizer to the tank prior to the fill up. Drive the car for a few minutes to ensure that the gas stabilizer is through the entire fuel system. Change the engine oil and filter. This will help assure internal rust and corrosion protection and reduce sludge buildup.
2. For water cooled cars, flush and refill the cooling system with new coolant if needed (typically every 2 years for the green stuff and every five years for the newer orange stuff (Dexcool)).
3. If you have not flushed the brake system in the past two years, now is a good time to flush and refill the brake fluid. Get another person to help out and work from the farthest to the closest wheel from the master brake cylinder.
4. Top off the transmission and differentials with appropriate lubricants.
5. Spray WD40 on all hinges (hood, doors, trunk, etc). It is also a good time to lubricate door latches, handles and key cylinders.
6. Wash (and wax) just prior to storage.
7. Clean the interior, and dress all vinyl and rubber with appropriate treatments.
8. For soft top cars, put the top up. For all cars that are being stored inside, leave a window or two down to allow air to circulate into the interior.
9. Jack up the car and place jack stands so as to relieve weight from the springs and prevent flat spots on the tires (more common on older bias ply tires).
10. If a cover is used, use only soft cotton or comparable material that breathes and allows air circulation.
11. To absorb excess moisture, place a couple bags of desiccant in the interior of the car and one or two in the truck. This will help minimize condensation, rust and mildew damage to interior materials.
12. Disconnect the battery while the car is in storage. To prolong the life of the battery, attach and plug in a battery trickle charger. Letting a battery sit too long and discharge is a quick way to ruin it in a short time.

13. Cover the exhaust and air intakes to the motor to keep moisture and small animals out of these areas.

14. For manual transmissions leave the car in neutral and the hand/emergency brake off. For automatics, leave the car in park and leave the hand/emergency brake off. Block the wheels as necessary.

15. Place a vapor barrier (poly film) on the floor under your car when stored in a garage. This helps keep ground moisture away from the undercarriage of the car.

16. If you store your car outdoors, exercise caution when using heavy tarps. Tarps can trap moisture underneath next to car, which can induce corrosion and bleached spots in the paint. Also, wind whipping the tarp can abrade the paint surface leaving it dull. Dust can also get rapped underneath and can act as a fine abrasive material on the paint surface.

17. Keep your comprehensive insurance on the vehicle in the event there is a mishap in the garage or storage area. Discounts may be available from your insurance company when the vehicle is being stored. Make sure you have all your normal coverage reactivated when you are ready to put it back on the road.

The above tips were borrowed from the Finger Lake Region Club newsletter. Depending on your situation, and experience, some other storage measures may be considered and/or necessary. Remember, you want to preserve your special car as much as possible when in storage.