How to winterize a classic car: 5 dos and don’ts.



While you’re willing to brave a New England winter with your everyday vehicle, your classic car is a treasure that needs to be sheltered from snow, ice, and road salt. But before you store it away, make sure you know how to winterize your classic car to prepare it for hibernation. If you do it right, you can make sure it will be in great shape and ready to cruise in the spring.

Follow these dos and don’ts to navigate the winterizing process:

- **DO put your car away clean.** Give it a thorough wash, wax, and polish. And make sure it’s good and dry before you put on its winter coat (see below).
- **DON’T put it away empty.** Fill the gas tank with premium fuel and add a fuel stabilizer. The stabilizer will keep the gas from evaporating and deteriorating, which can gum up your car’s carburetor. Run the engine for a few minutes after adding the stabilizer so it gets distributed throughout the system.
- **DO disconnect the battery.** Disconnect the terminals or remove the battery entirely to keep it from discharging during storage.
- **DON’T forget to use a battery tender.** If used properly, a tender will keep your battery charged all winter long. Here’s how to use one effectively.
- **DO give it fresh fluids.** Change the oil and oil filter, and replace coolant, brake, and transmission

fluids before storing. This will ward off corrosion.

- **DON’T let moisture build up.** Fresh fluids are good, but humidity and moisture can cause mold and mildew on your car’s upholstery and/or carpet. Placing several open boxes of baking soda around your car’s interior can help absorb dampness.
- **DO slightly overinflate the tires to prevent flat spots.** If you’re storing your car for six months or less, a little extra air in your tires can prevent flattened areas.
- **DON’T leave the tires on your car if storing longer than six months.** Longer-term storage can put excessive strain on your tires. Remove the tires completely and lift the car on jack stands if you store it longer than six months.
- **DO cover your car with an insurance policy designed for classic cars.** Patriot Insurance Company’s collector car policies keep your classic ride protected, whether you own a T-Bird or a Model T.
- **DON’T cover your car with plastic.** When choosing a winter cover for your car, opt for one made from a breathable fabric. If moisture gets beneath a plastic cover, it cannot escape, which can encourage the growth of mold. In some cases, moisture can even cause your car’s paint to blister.

Now that you know the right way to winterize your classic car, you’ll be ready to roll come spring.

For classic car insurance you can count on in any season, talk to a local, independent agent.