

NORTHEAST PA



CAR LOT

Car emergency kit for survival during blizzards

The editors of *Popular Mechanics Magazine* say these are the things you should keep in your car if you live in a blizzard-prone region of the country.

- Red flares (for protection against plows and to help guide rescuers).
- Two fresh, powerful flashlights.
- Blankets.
- Heavy sweaters, parkas, double mittens and strong lacing for parka hoods.
- Skier's face masks with very small eye slits.
- One knife for slitting seat cushions or other emergency use.
- Several cans of canned heat, or several thick candles and tin cans to put them in.
- Full gas tank. Buffalo drivers who ran their engines without stop burned eight gallons overnight. (Run your engine intermittently to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.)
- CB radio.
- Snowshoes and ski poles.
- Heavy boots and warm socks.

- A change of clothing and socks.
- Sandwiches and coffee. (Not necessary for survival, perhaps, but they will help keep you warm and your strength up.)
- An ax you can use to chop branches to provide shelter (especially if you may be caught out in wild country).
- A good storage battery in your car.
- A winter-tuned engine (important).
- Blanket or tarp to seal off engine against snow. Once a car stops snow quickly fills the engine compartment.
- Insulin or other medicine needed by a passenger.
- Plastic garbage bags sometimes help. (They are windbreaks and keep in body heat.)
- Long-handled shovel (shorties are hard to use) or a hoe.
- De-icing fluid for windshield.
- One army (or outdoorsman's) compass in a tough case!



CAR OWNERS seeking competent repair work should look for facilities where the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (NIASE) outdoor sign and indoor display board are visible, or where mechanics wear the orange, blue and white shoulder patches. When in doubt, ask the question: "Are your mechanics certified by NIASE?"

What if there were no automotive industry?

What would this nation be without a viable automotive industry?

It's a frightening prospect to consider because the economic foundation of the U.S. revolves around the auto sector and without it the economic situation in the country would be in chaos, says the Automotive Information Council (AIC).

Continued erosion of the domestic auto industry — spurred by imports, high wage rates and high interest rates — threatens the country's entire industrial base, says AIC.

Automobile manufacturing is a major consumer of the products of the basic industries, taking 20 percent of the nation's steel production, 30 percent of ferrous castings, 26 percent of flat glass, 60 percent of synthetic rubber, 11 percent of aluminum, 6 percent of plastics and 9 percent of paint.

Therefore, when a car is not sold, or when an import is sold, the basic industries suffer proportionately, as do the companies and employees in the component-making businesses.

The auto slowdown has placed 200,000 auto workers on indefinite layoff and they

have been joined by 400,000 in the supplier industries. In addition, more than 2,000 dealers went out of business in a year.

The servicing end also has been affected with untold thousands out of work because of reduced repair work and business closings. Most are likely never to return to work unless a dramatic turnaround occurs. Their lack of purchasing power also reflects on other types of businesses.

Squeezed by high import sales and high U.S. labor rates, the auto companies have suffered huge financial losses and have had to postpone and cancel plans for new job-producing factories.

The car makers therefore are seeking some wage relief to narrow the \$8 to \$10 per hour differential between the U.S. auto worker and his Japanese counterpart. That spread, plus Japanese tax exemptions, allows a Japanese smaller car to be landed on our shores for an average cost about \$1,500 under our own.

Changes must occur or the U.S. auto industry, and the basic industries, will go further downhill, says AIC, and that would be felt by every American.

Carbon monoxide can enter your car from a faulty exhaust system. In the cold weather you will be driving with the windows closed, so beware of

the odorless killer that can leak into your car. Inspect the headpipes, muffler, and tailpipe for any leaks, cracks or holes.

Tips to keep battery in tip-top shape

The fast approaching cold weather season significantly increases the need for proper maintenance of automotive batteries, says the Automotive Parts & Accessories Association (APAA).

"My battery was all right until it got cold last night," car owners frequently complain as soon as the first cold snap hits. By then it is too late to do anything but call for help, APAA notes.

Here is advice from APAA to keep your battery in tip-top shape.

• **Inspect monthly:** The battery should be inspected monthly to make sure the terminals are clean, the electrolyte (fluid in the battery) is maintained at the proper level, and the belts and clamps are tight.

Use a hydrometer to obtain an accurate reading of the battery's state of charge. These are inexpensive and available from most retailers of automotive products.

• **Lifetime batteries:** Most maintenance-free (or lifetime) batteries are sealed and so do not require checking of the electrolyte level. Even with these batteries, however, you sometimes can check the level by looking through the translucent material on the side of the battery.

These batteries keep the supply of electrolyte at the proper level by using an expansion, or vapor storage, compartment to trap the gasses

given off during charging and discharging. The condensation from these gasses drains back into the cells.

If your car has a conventional battery and the fluid level is low, add water to those cells which need it. The car should then be driven a while before using the hydrometer to recheck the electrolyte level. This will give you a true reading by allowing the charging system of the vehicle to recharge the cells.

• **Not in winter:** Never add water to a battery during the winter unless you plan to drive the vehicle shortly afterward. This will prevent the water from freezing and damaging the battery.

A fully-charged battery will not freeze until the under-the-hood temperature drops to minus 70 degrees F.; a weak battery, at 20 degrees F. — only 12 degrees below freezing.

The most common causes of battery failure are corrosion on the battery terminals and battery terminal ends, and a loose connection. These conditions are easily remedied if they are caught before a battery failure occurs.

• **The brush-off:** For corroded terminals, simply remove the cables from the battery. Be sure you remove the negative or "ground" cable first. There is no problem in determining which of the two cables goes to the negative terminal.

Conventionally mounted

batteries have terminals that are two sizes. The smaller-sized terminal is the negative one and usually will be marked "Neg." or "(-)." Some General Motors cars have side-mounted batteries — the terminals face a side rather than upward. The negative terminals on these batteries are black.

Clean all the terminals and cable ends with a wire brush. Once the cables and terminals are clean and shiny, re-install the cables.

• **Safety first — and last:** Be sure you hook up the negative/ground cable last. The reason for removing the negative cable first and replacing it last is to avoid the possibility of sparks or damage to the electrical system.

A tune-up can be an important life extender for your battery. An out-of-tune engine may be hard to start and this wears down the battery, which may not fully recharge afterward.

Other factors in accelerated battery wear are low idle speeds in slow-moving conditions. Picture a car with its windshield wipers, heater, radio and headlights driving at twilight in rush-hour traffic — a marginal battery can go "over the hill" quickly in such conditions.

• **Jump starts:** Batteries produce hydrogen gas when they discharge or are exposed to extreme loads such as cranking the engine for a long

period of time. An explosion can be caused by a spark near this hydrogen gas when the car is being jump-started.

If you ever need to jump start your car or someone else's, the Automotive Parts & Accessories Association suggests the following procedure so as to avoid any chance of your car's battery exploding.

1. Pull the two cars close enough together to avoid over-extending the jumper cables.

2. Connect one end of the other cable to the positive (+) terminals of each battery.

3. Connect one end of the other cable to the negative (-) terminal of the good battery.

4. Connect the other end of the cable to the engine block of the vehicle being started. Do not connect the cable to the negative (-) of the bad battery under any circumstances!

Avoid damage to the electrical components of the vehicle being started by making certain the engine is running at idle speed before disconnecting the jumper cables.

• **Battery acid:** Battery acid is highly corrosive. Avoid splashing it on your skin or clothing. Wash your hands before touching your eyes if you have touched a battery case terminal.

In case of accidental contact with eyes or skin, flush immediately with large quantities of water. Get medical attention IMMEDIATELY if the acid reaches your eyes.



DON'T LET WINTER snow you in! Prepare yourself for blizzard conditions by carrying, in your car, such necessities as flares and flashlights, long-handled shovel, de-icing fluid and a full tank of gas, as well as more personal items such as skier's face masks, blankets, extra sweaters and socks, and even sandwiches and coffee.

Automobile service receives high marks

Automotive service satisfaction has received very high marks in a survey just released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The survey shows that 90 percent of service customers rated their satisfaction at over seven on a scale of one to 10. The average level was a high 8.9.

Sixty-four percent scored their satisfaction at a perfect 10, while 10 percent gave it a nine, 11 percent an eight and 5 percent a seven. Other rankings: 2 percent a six, 3 percent a five, 1 percent each for four, three, two and 2 percent a one.

The NHTSA study included in-depth interviews with 2,434 consumers who were asked about their level of satisfaction with their most recent repair or service work.

It covered those who had work done at dealerships, independent garages, mass merchandisers, specialty shops and service stations.

This survey, considered the most comprehensive ever done on auto service, should dispel past generalized criticism, says the Automotive Information Council (AIC), which it said vindicates those engaged in this important industry which makes our freedom of mobility the envy of the world.

The most frequently mentioned positive remarks were: Quality of work, professional service, consistently reliable work, no trouble encountered.

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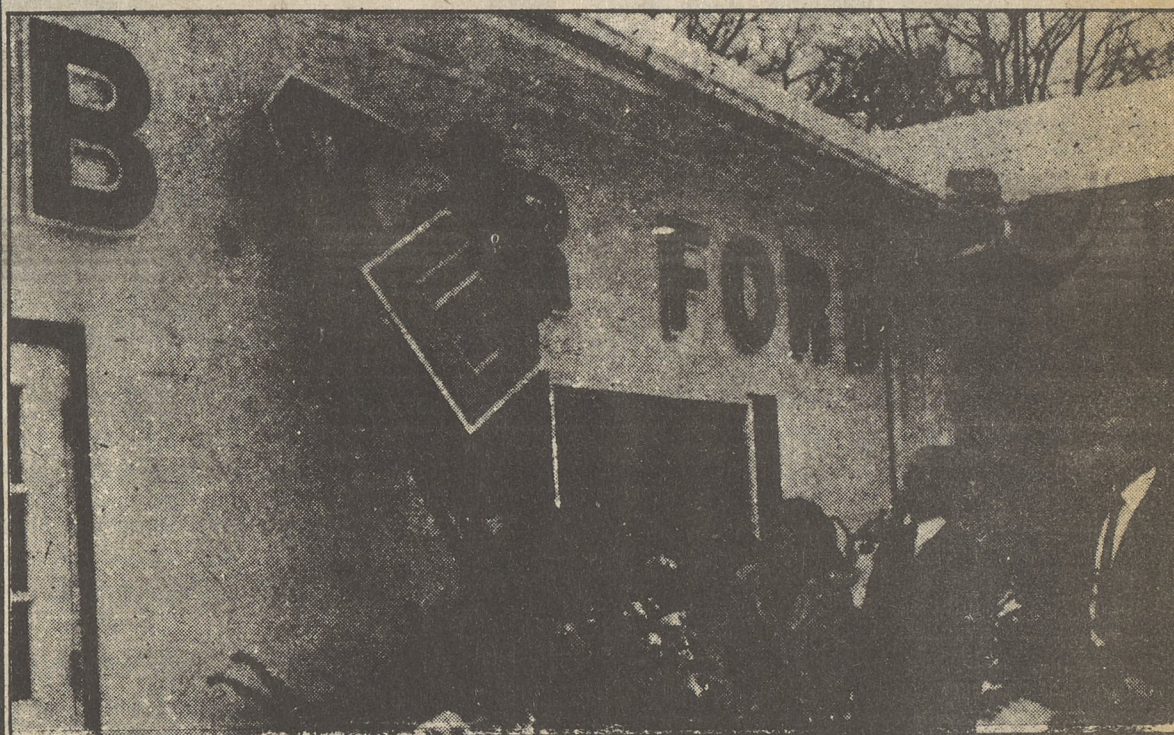
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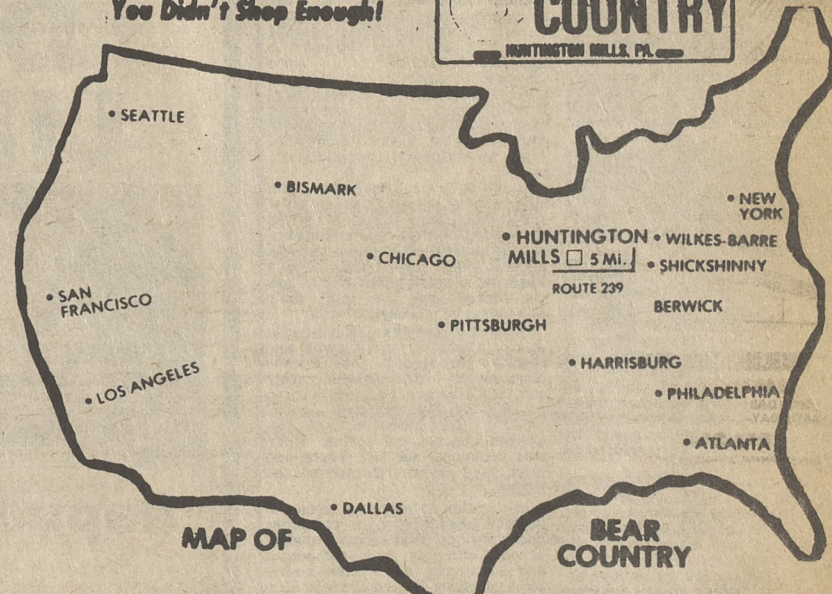
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