



DELIVERING
AUTOMOTIVE
EXCELLENCE

TUTTS OF DORKING LTD

Unit 7, Curtis Road industrial Estate
Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1EJ

T: 01306 885178

W: www.tuttsofdorking.co.uk

E: reception@tuttsofdorking.co.uk

7 MOST COMMON WINTER CAR FAULTS & HOW TO AVOID THEM

1.

VEHICLE BATTERY FAILURE

Battery failure is by far the most common of all problems when the cold weather sets in.

Why? Both the power output and the ability of your battery to take charge drops so the battery does not charge as efficiently when you're driving as it would in milder temperatures. In the winter we also tend to have more of our vehicle electrics running at the same time which puts additional load on the battery e.g. lights, windscreen wipers, heated screens and/or seats, interior heating etc.

What can you do to prevent it?

- **Replace your battery every 5 years.**

We supply and fit a large range of vehicle batteries. Our most popular are very high quality Excite or Bosch batteries which come with between 3-5 year warranties.

- **Invest in a good quality solar power battery maintainer, smart charger or trickle charger if the car stands for periods of time without being used or does frequent short journeys.**

We can supply battery maintainers and chargers at a competitive price so please contact us for details.

- **Ensure that the battery is tested before the winter months. NOTE – anything below 75% (12.45v) is weak, especially in the winter. *This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts***

2.

TYRE DAMAGE

Why? Let's face it... winter is a nightmare for potholes and water tends to do a rather good job of concealing them until it's too late! Impacts can cause bulges in the sidewalls and cause splits/cuts down to the metal cord.

Tyres are so, so important and all too often we see people waiting until they're so low they're illegal. Bad weather conditions not only affect the grip of your tyres but also the distance it takes you to stop.

What can you do to prevent it? Not much when it comes to potholes I'm afraid but...

- **If you experience an impact with a pot hole or accidentally slide into a kerb in the ice (we've all done it!) it's important that you check for damage.** Splits/cuts can happen in the tread, inner sidewall or outer sidewall and are dangerous if deep enough to see the inner metal cord. Bulges can also appear on either sidewall which means the internal structure of the tyre has been damaged.

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

If you've hit a pothole or kerb it's best to have the vehicle properly checked on a ramp and also to have the wheel alignment checked. We are able to do that for you and supply tyres at competitive prices if required.

- **Make sure your tyre tread is 3mm or above.**

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

- **It is also important to make sure that your tyre pressures are correct.** Correct tyre pressure is vital to your safety on the road.

Under-inflated tyres affect handling and grip, potentially causing irregular or unpredictable vehicle behaviour. They are also much more likely to suffer from rapid deflation, which is extremely dangerous, especially on high-speed motorways.

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

3.

DAMAGE CAUSED BY WEAK ANTIFREEZE

Why? This one is probably the most costly of mistakes to make. I cannot stress enough how important it is to ensure that your antifreeze is at the correct level, in good condition and protecting to the required temperature. Protection to anything under -25°C is weak (when taking into consideration wind chill factor) and should be changed, or at the very least strengthened.

When the fluid level is too low, no matter what the season, it can allow the vehicle to overheat and cause severe engine damage.

Antifreeze also contains corrosion inhibitors which protect all of the metal components within the cooling system.

When the fluid in the system is too weak it can freeze and expand and cause extremely costly, and sometimes fatal problems for your car.

Fluid freezing can cause damage to pipes, the engine block, cylinder head, head gasket, heater matrix etc. And if the water pump freezes it can strip the teeth on the timing belt which in most instances causes catastrophic damage to the engine.

What can you do to prevent it?

- **Ensure that the antifreeze level is correct and top it up if it's low.** There are minimum and maximum levels marked on the reservoir.
This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts
- **Ensure that the coolant is protecting to the correct temperature** (over -25°C generally in this country is ample).
This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

4.

WIPER FAULTS

Why? Various wiper faults are a pest in the winter months!

Wipers that are in poor condition can reduce visibility greatly.

Wipers often freeze to the windscreen when the vehicle is left parked (especially at night) and using them without properly defrosting them and thoroughly clearing ice/snow from the windscreen can cause problems such as damage to the rubber blades themselves, the wiper arms and expensive components that you cannot see e.g. the wiper motor and mechanism. Using them when frozen can also cause the fuse to blow.

What can you do to prevent it?

- **Make sure that your wiper blades are in good condition – that the rubber isn't perished or split.**

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

We stock a large range of wipers. Those that we don't we can order for delivery (same or next day, depending on availability) and fitting is free of charge

- **Make sure that your windscreen and wipers are fully defrosted before you use them.**

Using a windscreen frost protection cover is a great idea. Halfords sell a 'Car Cap' in 3 different sizes which covers the windscreen and all windows and is £29.99 regardless of size. I don't know how well they work but they seem to have good reviews and I'm ordering one for my car! Will save time in the mornings too!

- **Always turn your wipers off properly when you park to stop them automatically coming on the next time you turn on the ignition.**

5.

WASHER FAULTS

Why? Again, there are a few faults that can occur with washers. If the correct strength of washer fluid for winter is not used or you're only using water then the fluid in the washer system can freeze. This can cause damage to pipes and components such as the washer pump. It will also result in no washer fluid to clean your windscreen and attempting to use them when frozen can result in a blown fuse.

What can you do to prevent it?

- **Make sure that you use a good quality washer fluid and use the manufacturers correct concentration for winter**

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts

We stock a top quality concentrated fluid, at just £6.24 incl VAT. It protects to a temperature of -70°C, and lasts for ages too!

- **If the system is frozen and no fluid comes out, don't keep trying...** wait until they have thawed or you may end up with a damaged pump and/or a blown fuse.

6.

WINDOW DAMAGE

Why? Attempting to use your windows when they're frozen is just as risky as using your wipers/washers. It can cause a variety of issues including glass detachment inside the door, blown fuses, and even damage expensive regulators and motors. There's less but still some risk with manual windows.

What can you do to prevent it?

- **Make sure the windows are fully defrosted before operating them.** As with the wiper faults, a car cover will help as long as it covers the windows too.

7.

LIGHT BULB FAILURE

Why? It may sound silly to include bulbs in a list of faults, but in the winter months you're likely to use your lights more. This leads to a higher risk of bulbs failing at a time when both your visibility of the road, and the visibility of you to other road users and pedestrians is of paramount importance.

What can you do to prevent it?

- Regularly check that all of your lights are working. Including reverse lights, fog lights, side lights etc rather than just the main driving, tail, brake and indicator lights. Unless of course your car is fitted with a bulb failure warning system which brings up a light on the dash.

This is checked during a Winter Health Check at Tutts