

Breaking the Ice or Breaking the Window?

Iced-up windshields are an unpleasant reality drivers face in winter. For starters, it's freezing cold outside (obviously), which is typically unpleasant for creatures with body temperatures of 98.6°. Secondly, it's often early in the morning when the frigid discovery is made, on your way to work or taking kids to school. Then comes the de-icing ritual, a battle of brawn vs. ice.

Given this reality, an examination of common de-icing techniques might reduce the unpleasantness a bit. To follow are four de-icing methods evaluated based on effectiveness, cost, convenience and risk.

Method 1 – The Ice Scraper

Upside: Ice scrapers are easy to find and usually cheap. Scrapers can be store-bought or homemade. Spatulas work, as do credit cards (on thin ice). Almost anything with some degree of rigidity and a smooth edge will suffice.

Downside: Many store-bought scrapers are poorly made. The blades bend, or the plastic breaks. A broken scraper can leave its user finishing the job with a tool too short to reach the middle of the glass. Spatulas are not much better, and the metal ones can scratch the window if you don't watch out – plus if you bend or break it, you'll have nothing to flip your eggs with when tomorrow morning comes.

Method 2 – Water (hot or warm water, or cold water from the hose)

Upside: Using water is fast and easy, and it doesn't require the time and exposure to the elements scraping does, nor does it require the expense or preparation de-icing solutions do.

Downside: Using water can crack the glass. Uneven temperatures across the windshield cause warmer portions to expand while the cold parts do not. This makes cracks. In addition, water can re-freeze, sometimes almost as rapidly as you pour it on, other times, more slowly, after you are on your way. This can create serious danger due to loss of visibility.

Method 3 – Start it and let it de-ice itself

Upside: This method not only de-ices the windshield, it has the added benefit of providing a nice warm car to get into before heading out.

Downside: Vehicles can be stolen; windshields can crack; and you can get locked out of the car. The first is the worst. Leaving a car running unattended in the street is risky. The exhaust pipe sends a nice steamy signal to would-be thieves that there is a vehicle ripe for the taking. And if you lock your car to make theft difficult, there is always the risk that you can't find your extra key. As for cracked windshields, particularly in snowy parts of the country, temperature differences

can create the same sort of problems mentioned in the "Water" section above. Snow and slush sliding down the windshield can settle at the bottom of the glass creating a little "pile" that keeps the bottom colder than the top, which can cause the glass to crack.

Method 4 – De-icing Solution

Upside: De-icing solutions are fast and easy – spray and melt. Typically the formulations are such that if you plan ahead, you can spray the solution on the window the night before and usually prevent ice forming at all. A homemade de-icer is very affordable: white vinegar and water (50%-50% mix or even 3-to-1) mixed in a spray bottle will do.

Downside: The downside of de-icer is that the store-bought variety isn't free. They aren't typically terribly expensive, but budgets are tight these days and any expense can be too much. In addition, many of these products are made from chemicals that can harm the environment. Used in driveways and curbside, these chemicals often run into storm drains and waterways. The downside of the homemade de-icer is that, while environmentally safe, it's made with vinegar, which has a pungent smell.

Conclusion

There is no perfect way to de-ice a window, but some methods are less risky than others.

R' Ode to Winter

Now that winter is finally here
We have ourselves a time of cheer,
For winter has great holidays,
With fun for all in many ways.

There's skiing, skating and rolling snow
Balled up nice and fun to throw,
But before we toss that very far
Let's not forget to check our car.

Winter's not just time for fun;
Roads get treacherous when there's not much sun.
So check the tires and the antifreeze
And ward off potential catastrophes.

Or let us do it; we're here for you:
We'll check your car out through and through.
Coolant, tires and all the lights,
We'll make sure it's running right.

Then you're free to make your plans
For enjoying the winter wonderland.
But make that appointment pretty quick
Before the roads are frozen slick.

Winter Means TAILGATING!!!

Besides beautiful scenery and lots of fun seasonal sports, winter brings with it the joy of the tailgate party. We thought we'd toss out a couple of simple tailgating ideas in the spirit of firing up the grill.

Healthy Choice

Lemon Pepper Chicken Skewers

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 lemons, juiced and zested
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and Pepper (coarse)
- Vegetable pieces (bell peppers, onions... whatever you like)

In a shallow dish mix lemon juice and zest with olive oil. Cut chicken breasts into thirds dip them in marinade, and then thread them onto skewers (pierce 2 or 3 times), alternating chicken with vegetable pieces on the skewer. Pepper them well and season lightly with salt. Cook on medium heat, turning and brushing with lemon marinade occasionally, until done.

(Skewers with melon, grapes, pineapple, apple or other fruits kept cold and served alongside the chicken skewers work very well.)

Decadent Choice

Glazed Donut Cheeseburger

- Ground beef (1 ¼ lbs will get you 4 decent sized burgers)
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt and Pepper
- Medium cheddar cheese (any cheddar will due)
- Glazed Donuts (1 per burger)

Mix ground beef, garlic powder and a few shakes of salt and pepper. Shape burger patties to desired shape and thickness. Slice cheese into strips.

Bring barbecue to proper temperature and cook burgers to preference. Place cheese slices over burgers a minute or so before pulling off, then remove from heat and let rest for 3 or 4 minutes. Lower heat.

Cut donuts in half (horizontally, these are the halves of your "bun"). Place halves cut-side down on grill until they begin to "toast." Pull them off, toss burgers between them and have at it.

(For the really daring, precook some bacon and toss a couple of slices on each one. MmmMmm, you can feel your arteries harden as you eat!)

10 Things to Check Before Hitting the Winter Road

With winter coming soon, we thought it would be a good idea to make a list of ten things drivers should check to ensure their vehicles are winter ready. Check the list then give your car, truck or SUV a good look-over. If you aren't comfortable doing some or all of this, let us inspect them for you at our shop.

1. **Heater** – It seems obvious, but many people don't think about the heater until they find themselves shivering with cold.
2. **Defrost** – Don't wait until you can't see to discover your vehicle's defrost system needs repair.
3. **Windshield wipers** – Seeing properly is key to safety. Like the defrost, don't let a bad wiper motor or peeling blades prevent you from seeing the road.
4. **Lights** – Headlights, brake lights, signals and even the side marker lights are all part of safe driving in winter.
5. **Battery** – A quick battery test can make sure you aren't stuck in the cold waiting for a jumpstart or a tow. Cleaning the terminals is a good idea too.
6. **Brakes and Front End** – A thorough brake and front inspection will make sure your car will go where you point it and stop when you want it to.
7. **Tires** – Make sure your tires have enough tread for proper traction, and check air pressure, including in the spare – cold weather can lower pressure quite a bit.
8. **Cooling System** – In many parts of the country, a different blend of antifreeze is recom-

mended for the colder months. Do you have the right mix?

9. **Fluid check** – Engine oil, transmission fluid, power steering fluid, coolant, differential, washer fluid (freeze-proof or even de-icing solution), check them all before it gets really cold.
10. **Emergency supplies** – Have a first aid kit, flares, flashlight, blankets, jumper cables and even some water and food (especially if you are going on a long trip).



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