



For Immediate Release

Will your car battery make it through the winter?

Battery related calls for CAA service have gone up 25 per cent in recent years

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THORNHILL, November 13, 2018 – The cold subzero temperatures of last winter may be a distant memory, but data compiled by [CAA South Central Ontario \(SCO\)](#) over the last few years shows the extreme temperatures of summer and winter have taken a toll on car batteries.

Since 2016, battery-related calls to CAA have gone up significantly across South Central Ontario, and have remained high. Last year, CAA saw a total of 264,266 calls for battery service, a 25 per cent increase over the last three years. This year the data shows that calls are on track to match that number once again.

It's why CAA is encouraging drivers to get their car battery tested before the winter season to avoid an unexpected battery failure.

"When you are getting winter tires on, why not ask your mechanic to check the health of your car battery?" says Tony Tsai, AVP of corporate communications for CAA SCO. "Even with good care and maintenance, the life of a car battery only ranges from three to five years."

Modern car entertainment and navigation systems have increased demands on car batteries and if you live in a part of the country that experiences temperature extremes, your battery life may be even shorter.

Battery checks can range from \$30 to \$50 at automotive facilities across Ontario. CAA members can call for a battery check through the CAA Battery Assist program as one of their service calls. Watch for signs that your battery may need to be replaced, such as cranking, grinding or clicking when your turn on the ignition.

To gain insight into the behaviours and attitudes of CAA members towards car battery health and testing, CAA surveyed 2,460 members, using an online quantitative survey from October 1 to 12, 2018, and found the following:

- When getting their car ready for winter, a majority of members surveyed indicate that they will take their cars in for pre-winter maintenance, will install winter tires and find or buy a snow brush, but less than one-quarter plan to test their car battery.
- 1 in 4 CAA members in South Central Ontario admits that they don't know when they should check their car battery and less than half plan to get their battery tested before this winter.
- Among those who don't plan to get their car battery tested, close to one third didn't know they needed to get their battery tested.
- A majority of CAA members do not feel confident that they know enough about their car battery health.



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Motorists can avoid a dead battery with preventive maintenance:

- **Swap out your old one** - Most batteries last between three to five years. If yours is getting old, replace it before wintertime.
- **Keep corrosion at bay** - The white or blue powder that appears on your battery terminals is corrosion, which can prevent a car from starting. Inspect your battery and carefully clean away any residue that you find.
- **Install a battery blanket** - These handy devices, which need to be plugged into an outlet, bathe your battery in heat. That stops the fluids inside from freezing. You can also install a trickle charger, which does virtually the same thing.
- **Turn off your accessories** - Don't start the car with the heater and radio on. They can use up the power coming from the vehicle's alternator and prevent the battery from charging.
- **Disconnect your battery** - If your car is going to sit idle for an extended period, unplug your battery. Some devices, like clocks and alarm systems, use power when the car is off. Left long enough, they can drain the battery.

If you do find yourself in need of a boost, don't try boosting your battery yourself.

Here's why: Incorrect boost procedures may cause damaging current spikes or surges to your vehicle's electrical systems. Additionally, incorrectly connecting your booster cables can also cause severe harm. While the battery itself may sustain damage, it is replaceable. Your car's computers are not. Worse, a battery has the potential to explode when boosted due to the hydrogen gas it emits. The corrosive acid inside can severely burn your skin and eyes if it touches you.

CAA SCO will be educating consumers about winter readiness and car battery health today at Union Station. In addition, over 10,000 free information cards about battery health will be available for members at CAA stores across South Central Ontario.

About CAA South Central Ontario

As a leader and advocate for road safety and mobility, CAA South Central Ontario is a not-for-profit auto club which represents the interests of over 2 million members. For over a century, CAA has collaborated with communities, police services and governments to help keep drivers and their families safe while travelling on our roads.

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