Headline: Cold weather can be unkind to battery

Deckhead: Take steps to reduce chances it leaves you in bad spot

Cold weather affects your battery more than any engine component. Batteries are filled with fluid, most of which is water. They are susceptible to freezing if a battery is not fully charged.

Cold also thickens engine oil, forcing the battery to work harder when starting the car. Your vehicle’s battery loses approximately 35% of its efficiency when the temperature dips below freezing and nearly as much as 60% of its efficiency when the temperature falls below zero.

Slow cranking is a common sign your battery might be getting weak but diagnosing battery problems can be tricky. Your battery terminals could be calcified, or a parasitic draw, often from a mobile device, is draining its power. Unplug your phone and charger when you don’t need them.

AAA Battery Service offers fast, accurate and convenient mobile-battery testing and replacement. State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment will confirm whether your battery will hold

a charge, or if the problem lies deeper in the electrical system. The service is included with your AAA membership.

If a new battery is needed, you can purchase one and have it installed on the spot. AAA Battery Service vehicles carry batteries compatible with 90% of cars, SUVs and light trucks on the road. And each AAA-branded battery is covered by a nationwide 36-month, free-replacement warranty.

Our Instant Quote battery-price calculator on AAA.com will give you member and nonmember pricing for your vehicle’s battery, reflecting your exclusive AAA discount. In addition, every battery that AAA replaces is safely recycled to protect the environment.

AAA also recommends you take these special precautions with your vehicle’s battery this winter:

* Have the starting and charging systems tested every year.
* On frigid days, shut off the heater fans, radio and other devices before cranking the engine.
* Inspect the battery cables, posts and fasteners. Cable corrosion prevents power from flowing freely from the battery, reducing the power available to start the car. Clean the battery terminals with a wire brush or battery-cleaner spray.
* Avoid short trips. It can take as long as 30 minutes for a car battery to fully charge. Short trips can diminish the amount of reserve capacity.
* Preventative measures – such as garaging your vehicles or using a battery charger like the AAA Battery Tender – can help extend a battery’s lifespan.

Winter also means fewer hours of daylight and increased use of lights, wipers and heating, all of which extract a heavy toll on your battery. The more electrical devices in the car – such as

electronic fuel-injection systems, power windows and infotainment systems – the more power the battery should have.

Your best defense against failure is a fully charged battery and adequate cold-cranking amps – 500-700 – depending on the type of engine in your vehicle.

Cutline: STONE COLD – AAA Battery Service quickly will have you on your way if your battery loses charge. Image: AAA

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If your battery is failing you, give yourself the added peace of mind by calling the AAA Battery Service for a no-cost evaluation. AAA Battery Service is available from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. To verify AAA Battery Service availability in your area, call our toll-free number: 1-800-222-4357.