

Press Release

Preparation for the cold months of the year: This is how the Germans winter-proof their cars "from O to E"

A representative survey shows that the Germans place great importance on good visibility and the correct tyres

Elmshorn, 30 September 2014 – In a survey commissioned by star petrol stations, the opinion research institute YouGov has investigated how Germans winter-proof their cars. As a rule of thumb "from O to E", i.e. "from October to Easter", marks the recommended period for winter tyres, and as a result the Germans are currently starting to give some thought to the matter. In first place comes the ice scraper (70 percent), closely followed in second place by the "changeover from summer to winter tyres" (68 percent). In third place the Germans cite topping up the antifreeze (67 percent).

These are followed at some distance by the windscreen de-icer on 42 percent. 39 percent of Germans check their tyre pressures and their windscreen wipers, and 37 percent check the oil level or the date of the last oil change. Only just over a third of those surveyed (35 percent) test the battery, although current breakdown statistics indicate that one in three breakdowns can be attributed to the battery. Fewer than a third of them maintain the rubber seals (31 percent), have jump leads in the car (29 percent) or bother about the brakes (27 percent). The final positions are taken up by "cleaning the underbody" (18 percent) and "carrying out a car wash including protective wax finish" (17 percent). Only one in twenty has snow chains in the car (5 percent).

The Germans are not too keen on cleaning the underbody or protecting the paint finish with wax. "This can become a problem because road salt, frost and dirt accumulate on the untreated underbody, the paintwork and also the seals," says Wieslaw Milkiewicz, Board Member and Press Spokesperson of the star petrol station brand. "A top-of-the-range car wash with protective wax finish for the paintwork, as well as underbody and door seal care, is to be recommended for optimum protection in the cold months



of the year," stresses Milkiewicz. On the whole we also notice that younger car owners tend to prepare their cars less thoroughly for the winter and underestimate the cold months of the year.

This is also reflected in the survey results: Fewer than half of the younger drivers (18 to 24 years old) top up their antifreeze (45 percent), only one in ten has any jump leads in the car and only three percent give their cars a special car wash programme including wax protection for the paintwork. In contrast, drivers in the group aged 25 and above act with considerably more forethought. In particular those in the age group from 45 to 54 are above the German average in terms of all the precautionary measures to prepare the car for the winter (except when it comes to snow chains). Drivers aged 55 and over are most likely to check the battery, at 45 percent (10 percent above the average).

When it comes to preparing their cars for the winter, women and men are largely the same. Although women are less conscientious about checking the tyre pressures. Only 35 percent bother to check them The figure for the men is 44 percent.

For optimum preparation for the winter, star offers the following tips:

1. **Winter tyres:** Winter tyres are the correct choice from October to Easter, because as soon as the temperature drops to five degrees Celsius the rubber compound of summer tyres starts to become hard and lose adhesion.
2. **Oil check:** The engine should be filled with an adequate quantity of the correct engine oil. As it takes longer for the engine oil to reach the optimum temperature in winter, the correct product and the optimum fill level are extremely important.
3. **Battery check:** A defective or discharged battery is one of the most frequent causes of breakdown in the winter. For that reason it must be checked regularly. Brakes, suspension and underseals should also be subjected to a check.



4. **Seals:** The seals on the door frames should be treated with silicone spray or talcum powder, because this can prevent damage to the door seals resulting from them freezing up.
5. **Paintwork-preserving car wash programme with wax:** Frost and dirty roads in particular take their toll – with the right maintenance the paintwork will also survive the winter undamaged.
6. **Clear visibility:** Windscreen wipers and screenwash antifreeze must also be checked, so that you can see clearly in the winter. Another indispensable item in every car is an ice scraper with a sturdy handle and different edges for ice and snow.
7. **Winter accessories:** Hand brush, gloves, screen de-icer, jumper leads and in some regions snow chains or other starting aids are a must.

star petrol stations can provide professional advice, even in the cold months of the year, on all questions relating to correct car care: In addition to friendly and competent advice, they also offer a wide range of winter products such as star antifreeze and the screen de-icer.

Information about the survey:

The survey data were collected by the market research institute YouGov. The sample size is 1024. The survey was carried out between 09.09.2014 and 11.09.2014. The data was collected by means of an online survey. The results are weighted and representative of the German population aged 18 and over.

star – a strong brand of ORLEN Deutschland GmbH

star is the petrol station brand of ORLEN Deutschland GmbH, which has been operating more than 550 petrol stations in the northern half of Germany since 2003. The company, which is based in Elmshorn, near Hamburg, is part of the Polish oil and petrochemicals group PKN ORLEN SA, which is the largest company in central Eastern Europe with an annual turnover of EUR 27 billion in 2013.



PKN ORLEN SA is listed on the stock exchanges in Warsaw and London and is represented on the petrol station market in Eastern and Central Europe with a total of 2,700 petrol stations in Germany, Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic. In recent years, large investments have been made in Lithuania and the Czech Republic in order to bring the group a step closer to its goal of becoming the leading oil company in Central Europe.

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