

Windshields, Wipers & Washers

Other items that might also be needed when changing wiper blades include windshield washer fluid, an ice scraper, windshield de-icer, and some glass cleaner to remove stubborn bugs and road slime.

Adding Washer Fluid

Adding washer fluid is one of the easiest maintenance tasks you can perform. Keeping the washer reservoir full of washer solvent maximizes your visibility by keeping the windshield clean and clear, making driving easier and safer.

- Do NOT add plain water to the reservoir. Plain water can grow algae or leave mineral deposits that clog spray nozzles. Water may also freeze in cold weather. Add only washer fluid because it provides added protection from these elements



- Check your owner's manual to locate the washer solvent reservoir. Although the filler caps are usually labeled, it may be hard to differentiate between the engine coolant and washer reservoirs on some vehicles
- Most washer fluid is sold in gallon containers. A concentrated formula also is available in a much smaller container, which when mixed with distilled water, is as suitable as the already mixed version.

Spending a few minutes with your windshield, wipers and washers can help you preserve your safety and the safety of your passengers.



For more information about Making Sense of Car Care, contact your local AAA club, a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility or visit AAA.com.

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Important safety information: Due to the complex nature of today's vehicles, it is essential that you use the utmost care when working on your car or truck. Before attempting any service or repair, consult your owner's manual. Be sure you understand the service procedure completely, have the proper tools, and adhere to all safety precautions, including handling instructions for any chemicals you are using. If you are unsure about any repair, consult a professional technician.



**MAKE SENSE
OF CAR CARE!**

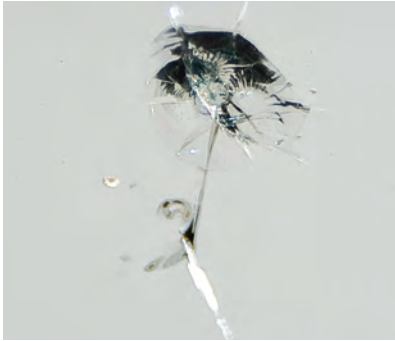


Understanding Your Vehicle's Windshields, Wipers & Washers

Did you know the windshield of your automobile is a safety device, like air bags and safety belts? It's true. Besides its obvious role of protecting you and your passengers from wind, water and debris, the windshield can help save lives by ensuring occupants are not thrown from the vehicle in a collision. Windshields also play a critical role in front passenger air bag deployment on many cars. And, the windshield (and rear window) helps support the roof of the vehicle in a rollover, reducing the chance of injuries.

Regular Check-Ups Keep You Safe

You may not notice some types of windshield damage immediately. That's why it's important to check your windshield, and all vehicle glass, regularly for any problems. Use the following steps to inspect your windshield, or seek the assistance of a certified technician:



- Check the entire windshield, inside and out, for chips and cracks. Minor chips and very small cracks may be repairable, provided they are outside the driver's primary line of sight. Any significant cracks or damage will require windshield replacement.
- Check around the edge of the glass for damage to the surrounding body work. Problems that affect the seal of the glass to the body can weaken structural integrity and should be repaired.
- Check the windshield wipers to make sure the rubber blades are soft and pliable. Hard, brittle, or damaged blades can break and allow the metal wiper arm to scratch the glass.

Look for Top-Quality Auto Glass Replacement Professionals

If you determine your windshield needs to be replaced, remember ... you get what you pay for. The lowest price should not be your primary consideration when having your windshield replaced. Instead, look for a top-quality professional to complete the installation to ensure the structural integrity and other safety features built into your vehicle at the factory are maintained.

Remember, the windshield does more than just keep out wind, water, and bugs; it helps keep you and your passengers safe in a collision. If you are seeking a qualified facility to repair or replace your windshield, AAA is ready to help. For additional information, visit AAA.com/automotive, contact your local AAA service center or visit myautoglass.org, the Web site of the Coalition for Auto Glass Safety and Public Awareness (CASPA).

Beyond Windshield Maintenance

Most people realize the importance of being able to see the road ahead clearly when driving in wet weather. That's why windshield wipers were invented. In 1916, a motorist struck a man on a bike during a rainstorm because water on his windshield blurred his view. Soon thereafter, the first hand-operated windshield wipers appeared on motor vehicles, followed by one innovation after another.

The proliferation of wiper systems with different arm styles and blade designs has created a lot of confusion when it comes to replacing wiper blades today. Now you not only have to match the length of the blade, but also the mounting system. Universal mounting systems that come with many replacement blades have made mounting easier, but it can still be confusing – especially if you want only a refill and not an entire blade assembly. Different blade widths, blade designs and blade holder assemblies mean some can accept refills while others cannot.

Buying the Right Blades

A good time to buy wiper blades is when you purchase other maintenance parts, i.e., filters, spark plugs or similar parts. If it has been more than a year since your blades were last replaced, it's time to buy a new set of wiper blades.

How well a particular set of blades performs is important. The blades are part of the windshield wiper system, which includes the wiper arms and holders. The blades ability to clean the glass depends on the slope and area of the windshield, the amount of spring tension on the wiper arm, the number of pressure points or claws that hold the blade and the material used in the blade itself.



When buying blades, be sure to match blade length. Refills will not fit unless they are the same length as the original blades. Replacement blades that are too long may create interference problems, while ones that are too short may not do an adequate job of clearing the windshield. And don't forget the rear wipers that are used on many cars, vans and sport utility vehicles. Rear vision is important too.

Replace Windshield Wipers When ...

Recent statistics show that the average motorist only replaces their front windshield wiper blades every three years. AAA recommends that you replace the wiper blades every six to 12 months, and more often in hot, sunny climates if your vehicle sits outside all day.

For safe driving, wiper blades should be replaced at the first sign of trouble. Streaking, chattering and noisy operation are all clues that the wipers are nearing the end of their useful service life.

Don't wait until you can barely see where you are going before thinking about changing your blades. You should change them at the first sign of trouble – rather than waiting until the blades are falling apart. Waiting until your blades are shredding is risky because the metal blade holder can permanently scratch your windshield if it rubs against the glass.