

# Classic Car Storage Tips for Hot Rod, Collector and Muscle Cars

You've rebuilt, nurtured and invested your heart and soul. This car is your pride and joy. Now it's time to store her. Follow these tips to keep your hot rod, muscle or collector car running its best when the off-season ends:

## **ALWAYS FILL THE TANK WITH FRESH GAS**

Old gas breaks down over time and can lead to gummed-up or varnished fuel lines, carburetors and injectors. But simply draining fuel before storage is a bad idea, as it will expose bare metal in your car's tank and fuel system to air and moisture. This is how rust, corrosion, dried gaskets and leaks begin. To avoid both situations, fill your fuel tank 95% full with FRESH fuel. Then add a quality fuel stabilizer to keep the gas fresh for as long as 12 months.

## **CHANGE YOUR ENGINE OIL AND TRANSMISSION FLUID**

Over time, acids, dirt and water accumulate inside engine oil and transmission fluid. Because engine oil acts as a waste collector for elements that break down while you're driving, unburned fuel, unspent exhaust gases and water vapor are trapped inside your engine. During months-long storage, some of these chemicals eventually break down the viscosity of old engine oil and transmission fluid, and can even begin to corrode metal surfaces.

## **LUBRICATE HOOD LATCHES AND DOOR LOCKS**

Use a dry lubricant like a graphite-based cable lube or Dri-Slide.

## **REMOVE OR PROTECT THE BATTERY**

When not being used on a regular basis, a battery will gradually lose its charge. Options for preventing this include:

- Removing the battery
- Disconnecting cables
- Attaching a battery tender— a small "smart" charger that automatically turns on and off as needed to prevent overcharging

## **KEEP YOUR TIRES OUT OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT**

Rubber is sensitive to ultraviolet light, and prolonged exposure to UV light will cause tires to crack, split and fail prematurely. In addition to avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, you can help prevent "dry rot" (see next page) and flat spots by inflating tires to their proper level before storage.

## **THOROUGHLY CLEAN ALL PARTS**

Start when the engine is cool, and carefully remove all road grime, grease, tar, stains, and bugs from all painted surfaces, chromed parts, and wheels. Make sure you use high quality cleaners. Once your car is clean and dry, apply a polish to all

painted and exposed metal surfaces to protect your finish from color fade caused by UV light.

### **STORE YOUR CAR IN A LOW-TRAFFIC AREA**

Ideally, you should store your car in a garage or other enclosed area where it's unlikely to get dented and will be protected from snow, ice, freezing rain and wild temperature variances. If indoor storage is not an option, be sure to get a form-fitting, breathable car cover. Your local auto parts or service store should be able to help find just the right fit and material for your beloved beauty.

<http://www.goldeagle.com/tips-tools/> Submitted by member Bob Winchell, who also added this: "I use Non-Ethanol gas exclusively. Keep the tank full when parked. And use all of these products. I have for years and found them all very effective."

## **Protecting Classic Car Tires From Dry Rot**

<http://coolridesonline.net/> Sta-Bil product web site.

Tire dry rot is not only unsightly, but it is also dangerous. Dry-rotted tires are more likely to develop leaks, and are more likely to fail or blow out completely.

### **Tire dry rot**

Tire dry rot refers to the cracking and splitting that can occur in the sidewalls or treads of rubber tires as the rubber ages and becomes brittle. It's also known as sidewall cracking.

Ozone and ultraviolet (UV) light are the primary environmental causes of tire dry rot. Tire manufacturers blend chemical ingredients into the tire during the manufacturing process in an effort to combat dry rot caused by ozone and UV exposure. Carbon black is added to the rubber to protect the tires from UV light. Waxes are added to the rubber during tire manufacturing to protect the tire against damage from ozone.

### **Why vintage cars are particularly at risk for tire dry rot**

Vintage cars are particularly at risk for tire dry rot because they are typically driven infrequently, and may be stored for months at a time. Similarly, RV tires and boat trailer tires may dry rot long before the tread is worn. The two primary causes of environment degradation of tires are UV and ozone and both may impact vintage cars that are parked for extended periods of time. UV rays damage any rubber that is left exposed to direct sunlight. Ozone will degrade any rubber that is exposed to the air.



### **How to protect the tires of vintage cars from dry rot**

1. Keep tires out of direct sunlight whenever possible. Garaging your vintage car, or at least covering the tires when it is stored outdoors, can help prevent UV damage.
2. Move the vehicle periodically when it is in storage if possible. Flexing the tires during movement helps the protective waxes to work their way to the surface where they can protect against ozone.
3. Use only tire protectants that do not contain petrochemicals or harmful silicone oils. These ingredients may strip protective waxes from the tire and speed degradation. A product like 303® Aerospace Protectant™ is an excellent choice to protect tires on vintage cars because it does not contain dangerous petrochemicals or harmful silicone oils, and does not remove the protective waxes that are blended into the tires. 303® Aerospace Protectant™ is actually absorbed into the rubber where it delivers unique, powerful UV stabilizers to further prevent degradation. *When using 303® Aerospace Protectant™ on wheels and tires, care must be taken to minimize spray onto the brake discs. Excessive overspray will lengthen stopping distances until the formula wears off.*