

# Tips on Storing Your Beautiful Ford, Lincoln or Mercury Automobile

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There comes a time, at least once a year, when you plan to store your vintage or classic automobile. Typically this is true if you live wherever there is snow. Below are 20 tips to help you retain your beautiful Ford, Lincoln or Mercury for many years to come.

## Pre-Storage

1. All tires, including the spare, should be filled to proper levels varying on the type of hot or cold environment your beautiful Ford, Lincoln or Mercury will be stored. Check your maintenance or owner's manual.

2. Some experts recommend that you fill the fuel tank with fresh fuel. This will help reduce the amount of condensation in the tank while the vehicle is stored for several months. However, keep in mind that a full tank of fuel can become a concern if your car is generally left unattended. A leaky fuel tank, for example, could cause potential risks to your classic automobile, and to those in the same proximity. As such, a determining factor may be to examine the condition of your fuel tank in order to examine its integrity over the period of storage.

3. Fuel stabilizer should be added to fuel that sits longer than four weeks so the gasoline does not become stale or begin to shellac which can cause major mechanical problems.

4. Changing the oil and filter is a must. Some car enthusiasts change the oil prior to storage, however, this routine maintenance should be conducted prior to starting your car after it has been in storage.

5. All coolant and fluids should be at proper levels. Check your maintenance or owner's manual.

6. A thorough cleaning of the interior, body and undercarriage is a must. Removing trapped dirt from underneath the frame and wheel wells will help preserve your automobile. Vacuum the interior to ensure any loose particulate, such as food crumbs, are removed which could attract mice and other unwanted rodents. Removing the carpets in a heated environment will help prevent any musty odours.

7. Do not use any water-based cleaning products which may become trapped inside the car and create an environment for rust to inhibit. If you do so, first ensure proper ventilation to air out the interior of your beautiful Ford, Lincoln or Mercury.

8. Fogging oils are a great application to coat the inside of your engine from protection of the harsh weather elements. Depending on the type of fogging oil used, applications vary. However, some experts prefer to remove the spark plugs and spray a small amount of oil into the cylinders to prevent rusting, and then insert the plugs. Use of a spark plug anti-seize lubricant on the threads is always advisable.

## Storage

1. For optimal safety, the battery should be disconnected. For anticipated long storage durations, the battery should be disconnected and removed from the vehicle and stored in a cool, dry area. For short storage intervals, a trickle charge battery charger or "smart" battery chargers can be applied.

2. For indoor storage on a concrete floor, it is suggested to place a sheet of vapour barrier underneath the vehicle to prevent moisture in an unheated garage. This will allow for easy identification of any coolant or fluid leaks

such as brake lines, radiator hoses, fuel tank, etc.

3. If a window can be slightly left open during indoor storage, but not enough to allow small animals inside, this will help provide a constant air flow allowing the interior to breathe. Convertibles should have the top up and any openings, such as ram air inductions and exhaust pipe(s) should be sealed to prevent animals from nesting. A flexible wire mesh screen is handy for these types of applications. Avoid using strong-smelling chemicals like soap or mothballs to keep animals away, but these can leave a smell in the car.

4. Cardboard should be used underneath the windshield wipers to prevent the rubber from sticking to the glass or remove the blades altogether and place in a dry, warm area.

5. Never apply the parking brake as it can stick to the rotors. If you are concerned about the vehicle rolling, place wheel chocks under the tires.

6. If your car remains in storage for more than four weeks, it is advised to raise the vehicle onto stands to prevent flat spots from occurring to your tires. Keep in mind that the type of tires you have on your vehicle will influence the time frame you have on getting flat spots if stands are not used. For example, radial tires will generally support the load of a car in storage than bias-ply tires. The same goes for low profile tires as they have less volume than higher profile tires and therefore, can usually sustain longer periods of car load during winter months. Lastly, an automobile such as a rat rod which may have fat bias-ply tires will want to be raised onto jacks.

7. Lock all doors and apply powdered graphite to the locks to ensure all moving parts will work when its time to re-open the doors.

8. A variety of car covers are available at market, however, always choose a cover that provides good ventilation allowing air and water vapour to escape. High end covers incorporate wicking materials and make for great car covers.

9. NOTE TO SELF. Reminder notes on the steering wheel or dashboard outlining the steps in your preparation for storage is one of the most important aspects that is often overlooked. When returning to the car in the spring, ensure all of these steps are reversed, checking them off as you go down the list. The list should contain every item separately.

## **Post Storage**

There are a few important pointers to keep in mind during the un-storing of your beautiful Ford, Lincoln or Mercury.

1. Brake rotors will often develop surface rust while your car sits in storage. The surface rust can generally be removed with a little elbow grease and a robust piece of fabric. However, any wobbling of the steering wheel indicated during brake maneuvers usually occurs if the rotors are warped. In this case, it will be necessary to replace or have the rotors turned on a lathe by a qualified automotive mechanic.

2. Be sure to review your list and remove any unwanted rags from tailpipes and or air rams that can cause damage or fire.