

A WINTER FRONT IS VITAL EQUIPMENT

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Question:

Is there any real benefit to a winter front on a car or truck?

Answer:

Yes! Yes! Yes! And here is why:

My daily drive from home to work is a tad under eight miles. Depending on the lights, it takes about fifteen minutes from door to door. Our family vehicles are a 6.4L diesel V-8 powered F-350 Crew Cab and a 5.4L V-8 gas powered Expedition.

Both vehicles are kept in a warm garage at home. However, in severe cold weather, neither vehicle gets to full operating temperature by the time it gets shut off from the short, light demand trip to or from the office. Most automobile manufacturers define this type of short duration cold weather operation as “Severe Operating Conditions.” Most Interior Alaskan vehicles experience this phenomenon. And most Alaskans have experienced the personal discomfort resulting from low engine operating temperatures in severe cold weather. But what most folks don’t know is how harmful operating in our super-cooling environment can be to the engine and other component parts.

For example, let’s talk about water. Moisture accumulation from condensation is one of the most destructive engine contaminants. Changes in temperature (even when the engine isn’t running), and prolonged idling in wintertime are the leading causes of engine crankcase condensation. Among other negative effects, that water attacks additives, increases the corrosive potential of common acids found in motor oil, and promotes sludge accumulation. None of this is good.

Next, let’s look at fuel dilution. Frequent starts, prolonged idling and cold running can result in fuel dilution of the engine oil. Fuel dilution decreases motor oil viscosity resulting in premature wear of pistons, rings, cylinders and bearings. It also decreases the concentration of oil additives thus reducing their effectiveness. Some experts say that as much as 0.4% of fuel used escapes to mix with engine oil in normal operating conditions – even more in cold weather.

There is something you can do to help. Get a winter front installed – just like I did.

The winter front goes on as soon as the temperatures dip below zero. It dramatically reduces the flow of super-cooled air over the radiators (some vehicles have as many as four different radiators, i.e., engine, transmission, power steering and air conditioning – none of which should ever be super-cooled) and into the engine compartment. The engine will warm up quicker and

will run at full operating temperature longer. This will help the engine “burn off” the fuel dilution and condensation buildup and can dramatically improve passenger comfort.

The local dealership representing your vehicle’s manufacturer can quickly set you up. We also use and recommend contacting either Alaska Tent and Tarp or Custom Canvas, two local companies who specialize in standard to customized winter fronts and other arctic automotive products. Get one and find out how, along with other winter accessories, a winter front will add to the comfort and longevity of your Alaska operated car or truck.

As with all things automotive, if you have questions as to how to best equip or properly operate your vehicle in sub-arctic and arctic environments, it is in your best interest to consult with the local dealer franchised to sell your brand of vehicle.