

Spring Tune Up Guide

For us Corvette owners that live in the northern climes, the season of Spring is a cause for much celebration. The days are not only longer but also warmer, the rain has washed the last remnants of salt off of the roads, and thousands of Corvettes awaken from their hibernation with a rumble. Why not make that last ritual as enjoyable as possible with a Spring tune up? Follow along as we go through the checklist.

Oil – Typically an oil change is one of the last things you should perform before your car goes into winter storage, but if this was overlooked, now is the time. Remember to change the filter as well.

Coolant – Again, this is something that should be handled before storage, but for newer Corvettes, the regular scheduled maintenance intervals should be followed. On older cars, replace coolant that looks rusty in color. While coolant should be mixed in with water, northern cars should have a stronger coolant to water ratio (70%/30% is recommended).

Battery – Check the battery case for cracks and the terminals for damage. Clean the terminals with a wire brush, apply grease to them and tighten the cable connections.

Plugs – These typically need replacement every 40,000 miles or so, but it's a good idea to check them periodically. Remove a spark plug with a good plug socket and wrench. Check the porcelain for any cracks, and check the electrodes for oil or excessive deposits. Worn electrodes warrant a new set; deposits or oil are indicative of bigger problems.

Filters (fuel, air) - For fuel filters, follow the service schedule in your owner's manual. For air filters, change every spring if you are using a replaceable element. A visual inspection is all that is needed for non-replaceable elements like a K&N. If it's dirty, follow the cleaning and oiling instructions provided by the manufacturer.

Fluids – Check and top off the brake and transmission fluids. Look for puddles underneath the car. If you see a few drops on the floor, those may be caused by a seal that will swell when you start driving. A larger puddle needs more investigation.

Injectors – Make it a habit to add a bottle of fuel injector cleaner with your first fill up in the Spring. It's an inexpensive safeguard against deposits that could clog your injectors, resulting in lost power and poor fuel economy.

Belts & hoses – Belts will show signs of cracking with age. Replace them if this is the case. Hoses tend to crack from exposure to heat and aging. For coolant hoses, pinch them near the ends. If you feel any voids or ridges, this could be indicative of corrosion on the inside.

Tires – Check the pressures for consistency. If one tire is really low find out why – leaking bead or a roofing nail in the tread?

Engine bay – Finally, inspect the engine bay. If your car was stored in a location where mice could have been present, pay close attention to wiring and hoses in the engine compartment, as rodents love to chew on insulation.