



# Vehicle Storage and Oil

**Summary:** *Store your vehicle with fresh oil in the crankcase, and don't start it up while in storage.*

So you are going to put your car in storage for three months for the winter, six months for the winter (long winter) or forever because it is a museum piece. Whatever the length of storage or the reason, it is best to have fresh oil in the engine when you put it in storage. Some people think they are doing their car/engine a favor by starting it up and letting it idle for 10 minutes every month if they are not using it, or the insurance has been dropped, or they just want to "hear it run". Whatever your reason (excuse) for firing it up when in storage, don't, unless you intend to drive it.

Here's what happens when you fire the engine up even if it has very good piston ring seal. There is some leakage of combustion gasses that get by the rings and into the crankcase oil. These contaminants (mostly gasoline and water from the combustion process) create sludge and reduce the effectiveness of the additive package in the oil. If you continuously fire the engine without ever getting it hot, the contaminants will build up. When you drive the car and the oil gets thoroughly warmed up; some of the contaminants are evaporated. Without driving the car and getting everything thoroughly warmed up, there is no chance of reducing these contaminants. For instance, if you store your car for six months, and want to "hear it run" once a month, you are doing more harm to the oil and to the engine than if you left it alone for that six months.

Following are the two list, a "Do" list and a Don't" list. Read on.

## **Do:**

1. Change oil and filter before storing your car.
2. Use a good grade of mineral or synthetic oil. Multi-grade oils offer the best protection.
3. Use a name brand oil filter. Some lower quality filters break away at their bond location inside the canister resulting in oil not passing through the filter element, but by-passing it.
4. If you are concerned about valve springs holding valves open, turn the crankshaft one full revolution. This closes the valves that were open and opens some of the ones that were closed.
5. If it is a race engine, it is best to remove the rocker arms and/or pushrods to unload the cam.

## **Don't:**

1. Store your car with old/used oil in the crankcase.
2. Fire it up when it is in storage just to 'hear it run'.
3. Use a "no-name" oil filter (See #3 above)

Remember, if it is not a museum piece, Drive it and Enjoy it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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