

# Fall and Winter Tractor Maintenance

Fall and winter don't necessarily end the usage of your tractor, but they do change its maintenance needs. The change of seasons is an excellent time to perform both regular maintenance procedures and those that are specifically tied to colder temperatures and ice. The following is a list of fall and winter tractor maintenance tips.

## Tips

- Always consult the owner's manual for specific maintenance considerations for your tractor.
- Make sure to update your maintenance log with any work performed.
- Once cooler weather has arrived, be sure to allow your tractor plenty of time for warm up (usually 10 minutes at low idle) before heavy use so that fluids can circulate and come up to temperature.
- Check the tires for cracks, wear, or dry rot. If needed, inflate to the correct PSI as marked on the tire. Cold weather may make the tires appear softer than they are; carefully check the tire PSI with a gauge after a few minutes of use to get an accurate reading on your tire pressure gauge.
- If your tractor has loaded tires, check that they are still in balance and have enough liquid.
- Change the oil and oil filter. This step is important even if you won't be using your tractor over the winter. Oil removes condensation and moisture from the engine when running or shut off; fresh oil before storage will be most effective for capturing moisture and preventing damage.
- Inspect the air filter. Use pressurized air to clean the filter of dust and debris. (Always use eye protection and a respirator when using pressurized air.) Inspect the air filter for rips, tears, or holes. Replace the filter if it can't be cleaned sufficiently or is damaged.
- Check in the engine area frequently for rodents' nests or damage. You can use pressurized air to clear any leaves, debris, or nests. Be sure to check the fins on the radiator. Use rodent deterrent place packs where appropriate and be sure to remove them before using the tractor.
- Check that the seat is in working order. If applicable, check that the seatbelt is present and use in accordance with your Roll Over Protective System (ROPS). Consider covering the seat with a UV resistant material to prevent cracking or degrading (use a tarp, sheet or cloth seat cover).
- Check hydraulic fittings and hoses for fluid leaks, cracks, and abrasions in the lines.
- Check the fuel level. If your tractor uses gas, consider storing the tractor with an empty fuel tank and lines, or use an appropriate fuel additive. If your tractor uses diesel, store with the tank half to 3/4 full and use an anti-gel additive.



## Winter Storage

If you do not use your tractor during the winter, then proper storage is key. Tractors kept dry and out of the elements will last longer and have fewer maintenance issues.

If you plan to run your tractor through the winter, you will need to make sure that any rodent deterrent methods are removed before use. When in storage, place packs in the engine, in the cab, or around the seat area.

- Check the coolant and hydraulic oil and fill it to the marked level (if needed).
- Test the battery and check for corrosion. Clean the top surface of the battery using a dry rag to clear grease, moisture and debris. Top off cells with distilled water, if applicable.
- Check all belts for cracks, dry rot, or tears. Replace if needed. Check the tension and tighten if needed. Rubber becomes brittle in cold weather, so be sure to check carefully for cracks and tears.
- If your tractor has a cab, check and clean the air filters. Wash the glass panels, fill the washer fluid, and replace the windshield wipers. Use rodent deterrent place packs when and where appropriate.



## About the Author

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