

Q & A's on Windshield Washer

Why does windshield washer have hazard symbols on the label?

The methanol in windshield washer is flammable when it is not diluted, and it is poisonous even when diluted. Proper packaging and hazard symbols help to warn users to treat the product with care and keep out of reach of children.

Sometimes my windshield washer freezes on the windshield even though it is supposed to be good to -40°C. Does this mean it is a bad mixture?

When a car has been sitting in cold weather for several hours or if driving at high speeds in very cold air, even the best windshield washer can form an ice haze on a cold windshield. Before using your windshield washer, warm the windshield by letting your car run a little with the heater on, and keep the windshield heated when highway driving on very cold days.

Drive safely and always keep a spare bottle of windshield washer in the trunk of your car in winter, along with jumper cables, a flashlight, a bag of kitty litter or sand, a candle and lighter, snack food and a blanket.

The Marketing and Regulatory Affairs Department of Recochem Inc. makes these tips available as part of our continuing consumer education initiatives.



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Windshield Washer Fluid

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What is Windshield washer?

Methanol, a key ingredient in windshield washer, keeps the liquid from freezing in the reservoir, tubing and on the windshield. The methanol also acts as a degreaser to help remove the oily film and grime that splashes from the road. Coloured liquid helps identify the fluid in the reservoir as windshield washer and not just water.

Why can't I just use water?

Water alone is ineffective at cleaning the greasy film and dirt from the roads and tends to smear on windshields. Water with detergents or degreasers is fine for warm summer temperatures, but it can't withstand the usual subzero Canadian winter climates.

When a car travels at highway speeds, the wind chill factor can produce temperatures as low as -50°C on the windshield. By using properly formulated windshield washer antifreeze that has been manufactured and tested to ensure that it meets the freeze protection specified, you will prevent liquid from freezing on your windshield.

Why can't I use household window cleaner?

Window cleaners for the home are designed and carefully formulated for windows. They are not designed to be compatible with automotive paint and finishes. Some ingredients in window cleaners can leave spots on car paint and will likely freeze during the winter months. Products should be used only for their intended purposes.

Choose a fluid that meets your climate and driving needs.

	Product Grade	Freeze Protection	Formulation
Good	Turbo Power Windshield Washer	-35°C, -40°C	blue; all season, methanol based; non-smear
	Turbo Power Summer Windshield Washer	> 0°C not suitable for winter use	pink; removes bug splatter, non smear
Better	Bio-Green Ethanol-Based Windshield Washer	-30°C	green; made from renewable resource, Ethanol; biodegradable; environmentally preferred
	Turbo Power Premium Windshield Washer	-45°C	purple; includes detergents, fluorosurfactants to prevent filming & streaking; stronger cleaning action
Best	Rain-X® Bug & Tar Remover Windshield Washer	> 0°C not suitable for winter use	pink; new & improved water repelling technology; special cleaning agents for a streak-free shine; removes bug splatter, grime, oil and dirt
	Rain-X® All Season Windshield Washer	-40°C	green; new & improved water repelling technology, removes light ice & frost, bug splatter and road grime for a streak-free shine
	Rain-X® De-icer Windshield Washer	-40°C	yellow; advanced water repelling technology; treats windshield with water & soil repellent; prevents windshield ice-up & streaking

Does windshield washer affect the environment?

Windshield washer fluid contains methanol, which is a volatile organic compound (VOC). On hot summer days, VOCs can evaporate, combine with other chemicals in the air and contribute to some levels of smog. During winter, these conditions aren't as prevalent, so using windshield washer will not have a significant affect on the environment.

It is important to switch to a summer formula during hot weather. Summer windshield washer contains detergents to clean off bug splatter and greasy dust. With less methanol levels, using summer wash helps to reduce the amount of fluid evaporation and VOC emissions into the air.

As an environmentally preferred alternative, Recochem developed a premium product made from a renewable resource – ethanol. Bio-Green Ethanol-Based Windshield Washer fluid -30°C is biodegradable and does not contain harsh additives or fragrances. It performs just as well as methanol-based washer fluids for streak-free cleaning and de-icing.