

Car Care Articles

High Water Headaches



Floods are one of the most common and widespread of all disasters. Most communities in Canada have experienced some level of flooding from high water due to spring rains, heavy thunderstorms or winter snow thaws – just ask the people of Peterborough, Ontario if they remember the summer of 2004. With Canada’s climate, and diverse terrain, flooding can be a serious issue.

While your vehicle may not have been flooded or completely covered in water, that doesn’t necessarily mean that you should not be concerned about water damage. If you drove through high water, there’s a chance that you may have damaged your vehicle. It all comes down to how much water the vehicle took in and where it reached.

Follow these guidelines to check for damage due to water intrusion or contamination.

- ⇒ Check interior carpets, upholstery and door and trim panels for dampness. If they are wet then the vehicle will need professional attention. If all you do is let the carpet dry, you will quickly be rewarded by mildew and nasty odors. Seat brackets, motors and modules should also be checked for rust and proper operation.
- ⇒ Pull the engine oil and transmission fluid dipsticks and differential plug. If the fluid appears milky, diluted, is no longer its original color or is beige in color, then it is likely the pans contain water. The vehicle should be towed to a certified auto service technician or repair shop. Driving the vehicle with water present may damage the internal parts and require extensive overhaul or repairs. (NOTE: Some new synthetic differential fluids may appear to be milky but are not water contaminated, when in doubt let a professional make the evaluation.)
- ⇒ Check the air filter for water. If it is wet, replace the air filter and change the oil.
- ⇒ Check the undercarriage, bumpers, radiator area and frame for mud, grass, dirt, debris and rust. If any of these are present have the vehicle washed and cleaned as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Have the brake system checked by a professional.
- ⇒ Check the exterior lights for moisture and water. Replace headlights and bulbs that contain water.





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- ⇒ Listen for abnormal noises while the engine is running. Make a note of where the noise is coming from and take the vehicle to a technician as soon as possible. Pay particular attention to the alternator, serpentine belt, starter, power steering unit, air conditioner and wheel bearings.

- ⇒ Inspect the suspension joints and lubricate as necessary. Many newer vehicles are lubricated at the factory for life; however, these joints should be checked for rust.

By being car care aware and following these simple guidelines, you can help minimize the potential for damage to your vehicle.