

As the old saying goes “ sometimes you may not be able to see the forest for the trees”. The same may apply to windshields, we are constantly looking through them as we travel but not paying any attention to how they really look or realize the attention they may be in need of. When was the last time you washed them, changed the wiper blades or checked the washer fluid?

Here is some information that may be helpful:

## Replacing Wiper Blades Regularly Saves Lives & Windshields

Wiper blades are like squeegees. The arms of the wiper drag a thin rubber strip across the windshield to clear away the water.

Are you as conscientious about your windshield wipers as you are about your tow vehicle or motorhome’s engine? RV safety is a critical concern for everyone.

Worn wiper blades are dangerous. Because 90% of your driving decisions are based on a clear, unobstructed view of the road, it’s a critical safety concern that your tow vehicle or motorhome’s wipers provide you with the cleanest windshield possible. When the blade is new, the rubber is clean and has no nicks or cracks. It wipes the water away without leaving streaks. When the wiper blades age, nicks or cracks form, road grime builds up on the edge and it doesn’t make as tight a seal against the window, so it leaves streaks.

Ozone, airborne contaminants, oil, sunlight and dirt all act to weaken and reduce your wiper blades’ ability to keep your view unobstructed. And exposure to sunlight and ozone cause the wiper blades to age, even if they’re not used much.

Weather also plays a critical role in your

windshield wiper blades’ deterioration. Freezing temperatures make the rubber in your wiper blades hard and brittle, which increases their tendency to crack or tear. Hot weather warps the rubber and prevents the blade from wiping your windshield clean.

Heavy use is hard on the wipers because dust, abrasives, road grime and bug juice wear away the cutting edge the blade needs to wipe clean. Even road dirt acts like an abrasive to wear away the flat surface necessary for a good squeegee effect. Sometimes you can get a little extra life out of your wiper blade by wiping the edge with a cloth soaked in window cleaner until no more dirt comes off the blade. Rubber also deteriorates over time. As blades age, they lose their flexibility and are less able to wipe cleanly. They may develop a permanent set or curvature, which prevents full contact with your windshield.

Your blades’ ability to clean the glass depends on: **The slope and area of the windshield:** Today’s windshields are more sloped than ever before for improved aerodynamics. But a sleek “cab-forward” windshield with a lot of glass area directs more wind

against the wipers, which can force the blades away from the glass at high speeds unless the wiper system is designed to resist lift.

**The amount of spring tension on the wiper arm:** This is important to keep the wiper refill in tight contact with the windshield and provide a superior squeegee effect.

**The number of pressure points or claws holding the blade:** Another key to streak-free operation is even pressure over the length of the rubber blades. Wiper blades are designed to attach in a single point in the middle, but a series of arms branch out from the middle like a tree, so the blade is actually connected in six to eight places. If ice or snow forms on these arms, it can make the distribution of pressure uneven, causing streaks under part of the blade. Some wiper manufacturers make a special winter blade with a rubber boot covering the arm assembly to keep snow and ice out.

The more claws a blade has, the broader the area over which the pressure of the wiper arm is spread. More claws also provide increased flexibility so the blade can more easily follow the curvature of a

large, sloping windshield for full side-to-side contact.

**The material used in the blade itself:** Most wiper blades are made of natural rubber, but some of the newer performance blades have a composite structure that combines a soft, pliable rubber on the squeegee surface for good wiping characteristics with a firm rubber in the blade body for improved support and durability. The wipers are some of the more important equipment on your vehicle and are not a place to try and cut costs; buy a good set of blades!

### Reminder

Whenever you replace your wiper blades, don’t forget to also check your:

-Windshield glass for cracks or chips (also clean the inside of your windshield)

-Wiper Motors – also check wiper arm nuts for proper torque

- Windshield Washer Pump

-Windshield Washer Hoses

-Windshield Washer Fluid

-Windshield Washer Fluid Tank (Reservoir) –

**You may also want to consider carrying a set of spare wiper blades.**