

Wheels: *Gale of Dearborn, MI asks by e-mail:*

"I move to Arizona every winter and return to Michigan in the spring usually to find that the batteries of both of my vehicles are discharged. Can I connect a battery charger to them both or would this cause the batteries to be overcharged? Also, what else should I do to help prevent causing damage to my vehicles when I am gone. I should have written to you last fall."

Halderman: Good question. The safest approach is to disconnect the battery from the vehicle and use a "float-type" battery charger. This type of charger not only charges the battery but also keeps it charged without over charging. Do not use a conventional charger as this type will continue to apply voltage to the battery, which can overheat and damage the battery. Purchase a battery charger specifically designed to be used to keep stored batteries charged.

Wheels: *What else can Gale do to keep his stored vehicle ready when he returns in the spring?*

Halderman: The tires can be inflated the maximum pressure as indicated on the sidewall to help keep the tires from flat spotting when in storage. Keep the vehicle in a secure dry location and do not store dog or cat food around the vehicle. The pet food can attract animals and then they are more likely to find a home under the hood or even in the air ducts of the vehicle over the winter.

It is also recommended that the engine oil be changed before storing the vehicle so that the oil additives are fresh to absorb moisture in the engine. If storing the vehicle for longer than six months, I also suggest that it be jacked up and placed on safety stands to keep the weight of the vehicle off the tires. Do not forget to restore the tire inflation pressure to normal when returning the vehicle to daily service in the spring. The specified tire inflation pressure is shown on a decal or placard on the driver's door or door jam.

