

FACTS ABOUT

Windshield Washer Fluid for Your Automobile

Ready-to-use non-freezing formulas only sold in California's higher elevations

How does windshield washer fluid contribute to smog?

Windshield-washer fluids were once large contributors to air pollution in California. Conventionally, large amounts of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) were used to lower the temperature at which the fluid would freeze. These mixes were sold year-round and in regions that did not see freezing conditions.

But VOCs contribute to air pollution. When exposed to the energy and heat of the sun, VOCs create ozone, the main constituent of smog and a serious threat to those with cardiopulmonary disease. Ozone exposure is associated with coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and the worsening of asthma symptoms.

To reduce the public's exposure to ozone, the California Air Resources Board worked with industry to devise a strategy that would eliminate unnecessary VOCs in warmer climates and allow their use in colder zones.

Now, VOCs in windshield wiper fluids are limited to very low concentrations in lower, warmer elevations. And in higher elevations, where freezing conditions are expected, higher VOC concentrations are permitted.

How do I select an appropriate concentration?

When buying windshield washer fluid you have a choice of ready-to-use or concentrated products. Be aware of the options and select a product that fulfills your needs, but minimizes air pollution.

The type of fluid available to consumers is limited by region.

Stores in colder climates, called "Type A" areas, may offer ready-to-use formulas designed to provide anti-freeze protection. This assures the liquid does not freeze in the vehicle's storage well, or when sprayed onto the windshield to remove snow and ice.

Stores in warmer areas where freezing temperatures are rare may not sell products with the higher VOC concentration in ready-to-use bottles. These regions are termed "non-Type A." But every store in the State may offer concentrates that allow the consumer to mix levels appropriate for freezing weather conditions.

How does this help clean the air?

California's air pollution control program is one of the most effective in the world. Coordinated state, regional and local efforts have steadily improved our air quality. As a result, the air is the cleanest in years.

The significant VOC reductions from Consumer Products, including those from windshield washer fluid, have contributed to improving air quality.

For more information

Please contact 1-800-END-SMOG.

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