Headline: Wiper blades should look sharp

Deckhead: Don’t cut the importance of maintaining them

Windshield wiper blades should be sharp, crisp and well maintained. They’re too important to ignore.

Streaking and failure to clear debris from the windshield could become hazardous. It’s difficult to drive if you can’t see where you are going. That’s why drivers shouldn’t ignore their importance and follow steps to keep them properly working.

A primary step is to refrain from running them over dry windshields. Wipers weren’t made to work on dry surfaces. Always use windshield fluid or make sure the glass is wet, and don’t turn off the vehicle before turning off the wipers. They could finish their swipes over dry glass once the car is restarted.

Heavy snow and ice make wipers stick. Remove the snow and scrape and/or defrost the ice completely before using the wipers. Frozen wipers could break or the motor from which they are powered could ruin and prove costly.

It’s wise to consistently clean the blades. Caked dirt and debris could limit their effectiveness. The wipers likely will leave streaks and reduce the driver’s vision. Clean the windshield and the wipers during stops to refuel. Run a finger along the blades to clear the debris and use a cloth to remove stuck fragments.

A forgotten step might be cleaning the bottom of the windshield. Wipers push dirt each time they cross the windshield. Dirt could accumulate where the wipers rest. Drivers should take time to clear dirt or snow from the bottom of the windshield. It avoids streaking and scratching.

Replace the blades regularly. It’s recommended to have them changed twice a year. This can be a costly task that many drivers might ignore but have them replaced immediately if it’s becoming more difficult to see the road. It’s a task car owners can do by themselves.

And purchase the proper wiper blades. Check both blades; they might be different lengths that work congruently to clean the whole windshield. Read the owner’s manual to see which blades the manufacturer recommends. There is an assortment from which to choose. Some are designed for winter weather, with sturdier rubber composites. They’re more expensive but might be a wise choice for drivers who live in areas that receive significant snowfall.

AAA members can visit AAA.com/AutoRepair to find a nearby AAA Approved Auto Repair facility.

Cutline: WIPE OUT – Have your vehicle’s windshield wipers changed if they are showing signs of wear. Image: malkovkosta. Adobe Stock.