SEASONAL DRIVING & READINESS

Bringing Your Corvette Back to Life After Storage

There's a particular excitement that comes with spring—that first warm day when you walk into the garage, pull back the cover, and see your Corvette waiting. After months of patient hibernation, the driving season has arrived.

But before you turn the key, there's work to be done. Not because your Corvette is fragile, but because it deserves the same care you gave it when you put it away. The recommissioning process is where many owners inadvertently undo months of careful storage preparation.

> *Rushing this stage can create more problems than an entire winter of sitting ever would.*

At Corvette Connection, we've spent nearly fifty years helping owners bring their cars back to life each spring. We've seen what happens when this process is rushed—and we've seen the difference that a thoughtful approach makes. This guide walks you through exactly what we do, and why each step matters.

Before the Engine Starts

The temptation to fire up the engine immediately is understandable. But a few minutes of inspection now can prevent hours of frustration later.

Begin with a slow walk around the car. Look underneath for any signs of fluid that may have seeped during storage. Check for evidence of unwanted visitors—rodents are remarkably creative about finding warm places to nest, and they can cause significant damage to wiring and upholstery in a surprisingly short time.

Open the hood and inspect carefully. Look for loose belts, disconnected hoses, cracked vacuum lines, or any residue around gaskets that might indicate developing leaks. These issues are far easier to address before the engine runs.

The Fluids Tell the Story

Every fluid in your Corvette has a story to tell about what happened during storage.

Engine Oil

Check both level and condition. Fresh oil should look clean and smell like oil—nothing else. If you detect even a hint of fuel in the oil, or if it appears milky, stop. These are signs of contamination that can cause serious internal damage if the engine is started. This isn't a minor inconvenience; it's a warning that must be heeded.

Coolant

Verify the level in both the radiator and overflow tank. Look at the color and clarity. Coolant that has turned rusty or appears contaminated has lost its protective properties and needs attention before the cooling system is put under load.

Brake Fluid

Brake fluid naturally absorbs moisture from the air. Over time, that moisture corrodes internal brake components from the inside out—a process that accelerates when cars sit unused. Dark or cloudy brake fluid is telling you something. Listen to it.

> **WHY THIS MATTERS**
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> Contaminated fluids don't just fail to protect—they actively cause damage. The few minutes spent checking now can prevent thousands in repairs later.

Battery and Electrical Systems

If you disconnected the battery for storage, reconnect it now with the ignition firmly in the off position. This simple precaution prevents voltage spikes that can damage sensitive electronics.

Clean the terminals if needed and check the ground cable condition. Once reconnected, test all the basics: headlights, turn signals, brake lights, horn, and gauges. Electrical gremlins are much easier to chase down in a well-lit garage than on the side of the road.

Tires and Suspension

Tires lose pressure during storage—it's simply the nature of the materials. Check and adjust to the recommended PSI. While you're down there, inspect the sidewalls for any cracking that may have developed.

Flat spots are common on tires that have sat for extended periods. Minor flat-spotting typically works itself out after a few miles of driving, but severe cases may require tire replacement.

Take a moment to visually inspect the suspension components. Look for leaking shocks, torn bushings, and any fasteners that may have loosened. If the car was lifted during storage, confirm it was supported under the suspension points rather than the frame—improper lifting can stress bushings and joints.

The First Start

Now comes the moment you've been waiting for.

For fuel-injected models, turn the key to the "On" position and pause. Listen for the fuel pump to prime—that brief whir tells you the system is pressurized and ready. Then start the engine without touching the accelerator.

Let it idle. Watch the oil pressure stabilize. Monitor the temperature gauge as the engine warms. Listen for anything that sounds wrong—unusual ticking, knocking, or roughness. Your ears know more than you might think; trust them.

Resist the urge to rev the engine while it's cold. Cold oil doesn't protect like warm oil does, and cold metal doesn't tolerate stress the way warm metal does.

The Brake System Check

Before you drive anywhere at speed, press the brake pedal firmly. It should feel solid and responsive. Any softness or sponginess indicates air or moisture in the system that needs attention before the car leaves the garage.

Light surface rust on the rotors is completely normal after storage—it will clear with gentle braking during your first drive. But the pedal feel must be right first.

Your First Drive

Think of this first drive as a diagnostic session, not a celebration. Keep the revs moderate. Listen for vibrations you haven't heard before. Pay attention to how the steering responds. Watch the gauges closely.

After ten or fifteen minutes of driving, return home and do one more inspection. Look underneath for any new leaks. Recheck tire pressures—they'll have changed as the tires warmed up. Let the engine cool, then verify coolant level.

> *A Corvette that's recommissioned thoughtfully will reward you with a season of confident driving.*

Seasonal Maintenance Timing

Spring is the ideal time to schedule preventative maintenance. Oil and filter service, brake fluid flush, cooling system inspection, alignment check, and air conditioning system evaluation should all be on your radar. Addressing these early in the season means you won't be sidelined during the best driving months.

The Philosophy of Driving

Here's something many owners don't realize: the healthiest thing you can do for your Corvette is drive it. Regular drives to full operating temperature keep seals flexible, fluids circulated, and mechanical components exercised. Letting a car sit is far harder on it than reasonable mileage.

Avoid the habit of starting the engine and letting it idle in the driveway. Idling doesn't bring the engine to proper operating temperature and can actually promote moisture buildup in places you don't want it.

A FINAL WORD

We've specialized in Corvette care since 1974, and in that time we've learned that mechanical problems rarely happen suddenly. They develop slowly, from small oversights that compound over time.

A Corvette that's stored correctly and recommissioned thoughtfully will perform better, age more gracefully, and cost less to maintain than one that's neglected. The attention you give now pays dividends for years.

If you'd prefer professional peace of mind, we offer comprehensive seasonal inspections designed specifically for Corvettes of every generation.

Drive confidently. Maintain properly. Protect your investment.

Corvette Connection, LLC

Serving Corvette owners since 1974