



Storing Your Fiero.

Prepping The Vehicle

- The cleaner the vehicle the better, and that goes beyond wash, wax and shine. Pick a warm, dry day to do the cleaning.
- Fill the gas tank, then add an adequate amount of gasoline stabilizer (also made for lawnmowers, snow blowers, etc.) to prevent gum and varnish formation. A full tank will help keep moisture out.
- Remove dirt from the underbody, particularly from the wheel wells. Dirt holds moisture, and the combination of moisture and air causes iron and steel to rust.
- Really, really clean the interior and trunk of the vehicle with a household vacuum cleaner, using those little attachments that reach into nooks and crannies. The battery-powered car vacuum just doesn't have the suction. The object is to remove all pizza crusts, jellybeans, dog biscuits--anything that could attract and nourish a critter.
- Perform an oil change. Dirty oil can lead to corrosion and premature bearing wear.
- Do not set the parking brake during storage to prevent pads from sticking.

The Basics

- Indoors is always better, even if the storage period is summer in the South. If you're going to be away for up to a couple of years, it definitely has to be kept inside. If you don't have the place, find an indoor storage facility--it will be money well spent. In fact, you also should get someone to take out the car periodically for an "exercising" drive. If you can't afford to do long-term storage right, you might have to pay a lot for restoration when you return.
- If outdoor "storage" is your only choice, don't give up. There's still a lot you can do to minimize the damage, particularly for seasonal storage.

Indoor Storage

- Allow the car to air-dry. If the garage or shed has a concrete or earth floor, create a floor vapor barrier with plastic sheeting or tarps. With an earth floor, make a drive-along "path" from strips cut from a sheet of plywood and place them over the vapor barrier.
- Disconnect the battery cables (ground cable first) and remove the battery. Clean the top and sides of the battery to remove any moisture-retaining, conductive film. Place it on a clean, dry surface such as blocks of wood or a polystyrene spacer. Connect a float charger, one designed to maintain a battery charge for long periods. Removing the battery also gives you the chance to inspect the battery box for any corrosion, and to clean it out.
- Lubricate the hood release latch, hood and door hinges to protect them from moisture.
- Check the freeze point of the engine coolant with a hydrometer to make sure it's low enough for the ambient temperatures.

Indoor Storage Continued

- Protection from rodents and other critters is important. They not only chew on spark plug wires and other wires, but they can crawl into openings and set up residence. Stuff steel wool or a ball of aluminum foil into the tailpipe and engine air intake.
- Moth balls scattered under and around the car will deter rodents as well.
- Stuff clean rags between the wiper arms and windshield to hold the blades off the glass (or remove the blades). This will keep them from sticking to the glass, which could both leave marks and ruin the rubber. Apply a film of rubber lubricant to the squeegees.
- Place a box of baking soda in the interior to eliminate odors.
- Wipe down all rubber seals around doors, windows, trunk and hood with a rubber lubricant to keep them clean.

Tires

- Less than eight months you just need to fill them up to their max pressure (listed on the side of the tire) because air pressure changes with temperature. If the tires get too low with cold temperatures, they will “flat spot”.
- If you plan on storing every year, having the tires filled with nitrogen is the best solution. The tire pressure does not change with temperature. They can be driven year round with nitrogen. (Improves gas mileage as well) They also help keep the tires from drying out over the years.
- If the vehicle is to be left for eight months or longer, the issue of flat-spotting the tires is worth considering. Prevention is straightforward if you have a set of four jack stands. Jack up each end of the vehicle so that it's high enough to slip a jack stand, in the lowest position, under each lower arm. Jack stands will eventually sink into dirt floors--use plywood squares under them. Remember to mount the jack stands under the control arms. Do not let the suspension “hang” as this could cause damage to shocks and struts,

Outdoor Storage

- If you must store outside on an earth surface, the best you can do is park the car on a layer of plywood over a continuous layer of heavy-duty plastic. The combination won't keep all windblown moisture from snow and rain off the underbody. However, to do any better in a windy area you'd have to make the plastic layer oversize. As a final step before placing any cover, lift the ends up and tuck them into the body (trap them in bottom door openings, tape and tie to unpainted trim, etc.) to create a sort of underbody diaper. This is not easy because you don't want plastic sheeting against painted metal body parts, where it could trap moisture and cause rust and paint damage.
- Outdoor storage prep, like indoor, starts with a clean, dry vehicle. Put mothballs in the passenger cabin, laying them on sheets of aluminum foil. Leave each window open a half-inch, so the interior can breathe, but cut some strips of fine screening to cover the openings and tape the strips to glass and molding with masking tape. Be careful not to tape to the car body paint surfaces. This is done because sunlight can heat and cool the interior drastically causing moisture inside the car. You don't want mold/mildew forming inside.
- Perform all the other indoor prep, including insect-and rodent-proofing and rust and corrosion prevention. Also remove the battery and store it indoors on a float charger.

Body Covering

- The plain fact is that you have to cover the body, and there's no perfect way to do so. That's why we say that indoors is No. 1, and outdoors is No. 2--because it's all that's left.
- There are more choices in body covers than we can count, ranging from \$20 to over \$300. At the lowest price, you're likely to get just a plastic cover that's made in a few sizes to fit all vehicles in a specific category (car, SUV, truck). It may not fit well and it can trap moisture underneath, damaging the vehicle finish. It's intended as a dust and rain cover for a day or two--at best.
- Fit is very important, even if the cover is a "breather" (just porous enough to allow air to pass through, but able to restrict moisture). Wind can whip the inner surface of a loose-fitting cover against the paint and when you peel off the cover, the body may look as if the paint had been sanded. As the prices go up, so does the quality of the fit of the covers--and the materials will be more body-friendly.
- For sunny areas, pick a cover material that keeps out ultraviolet rays to protect the car's finish. But also prep the interior surfaces with suitable protectants such as leather conditioner and plastic treatment.
- If you're in a wet 'n' windy area, you can get extra protection by first covering the body paint with soft blankets, tied down with bungee cords. The blankets not only will wick up moisture that gets through, but provide a protective layer under the vehicle cover.
- A premium breathable custom-fit cover that extends down to cover the wheel wells, and is secured with straps, is your best bet for outside.
- For inside use you can get a light breathable cover to help keep dust and dirt off of the body.

Exercising The Car

- Some folks like to “exercise” their cars. This means running the car once or twice a month. While this can be good, some rules need to be followed.
- Just starting the engine and letting it reach operating temperature is not a proper exercise. That actually can be harmful, allowing oil dilution by fuel and moisture. A 30-mile drive every 30-60 days, with brakes, transmission, steering and air conditioning all operating, is what the car really needs.
- This of course requires you to undo some of the prep work and redo it after you drive it.
- If you plan on doing the exercising, It is best to stick to the schedule. Otherwise you could do more harm than good.
- Either storage method is good, as long as you follow the guidelines, your Fiero will feel every bit as good as you remember.

Long Term Storage

- If you plan on storing your car for years, It is best to have it professionally stored in a environmentally controlled storage facility.
- Generally long term requires draining all fluids and oil fogging the engine.

Spring Wake Up

- Remove all the protective covers .
- Install battery.
- Check tire pressure.
- Start the engine and take the car out for a 20 – 30 mile cruise to exercise all the components and systems.
- Enjoy another summer of driving.



Questions and Comments

