

## WINTERIZE / MAINTAIN GAS POWERED EQUIPMENT

The winterization or preparation for long term non use of gas powered equipment is often overlooked. This oversight can unfortunately be costly and very frustrating. Believing that new equipment will continue to perform well for a year without care can be a surprise to many people.

Small engine repair shops do a good business fixing equipment that should not have needed repair if the owner had read and followed the manuals instructions and taken care of their gas powered equipment. It may be a shock to learn the malfunctioning equipment, still in warranty, is not covered by the warranty because of improper care.

The most common error is leaving fuel in the equipment. Fuel should be drained or stabilized. I highly recommend draining. The current 10% ethanol containing fuels partially evaporate fairly quickly leaving behind either a gummy deposit or a thin film of very hard varnish. You would never think of putting a coat of varnish on the delicate parts of the carburetor, but that is what happens. These deposits will clog the carburetor and fuel system over time. This can also happen during the summer if the equipment is not used. Typically 1-3 months. This one oversight is the #1 reason why chainsaws and generators fail to work.

### **Drain the fuel**

You need to drain the tank and carburetor completely of fuel then let them dry out. First run the piece of equipment for a few minutes, then either turn off the fuel to the carburetor or drain the tank, then start the equipment again and run it until it stops from lack of fuel. Drain the fuel tank if it has not already been drained. You can use the fuel in your car. Drain all two-cycle engines as well. You can tell you have a two-cycle engine if you are supposed to add oil to the fuel. Do not use this fuel in your car. Because it does not store well, safely dispose of the fuel.

### **Add fuel stabilizer**

It is highly recommended never to use gasoline containing ethanol in your small engines. Even a 10% blend of ethanol can ruin them. But we are stuck here in Houston because it is law that all fuel contain ethanol. The closest non ethanol fuel can only be obtained 100 miles outside Houston. The mixture of ethanol/fuel attracts moisture into the gasoline. Gas that is old and sits over a period of time attracts water. If gas has to be stored then you have to add a fuel stabilizer. Even then you are not assured protection.

Add the recommended amount to the capacity of a full tank and then run the engine for a few minutes to ensure the stabilized fuel gets into the carburetor.

**Air filter**

Either replace or clean the air filter. If it is a dry filter (usually paper type) blow it out with compressed air. If it is an oil type (a foam pad) you can wash it out with soapy water. Rinse it well, let it dry, then add a little 30 weight oil.

**Change the spark plug**

If the engine has had a significant amount of use you may want to replace the spark plug. If light use just check and maybe clean the plug. Use a wire brush to clean the plug.

**Clean the outside of the machine**

Remove all the debris from the outside of the equipment. Wipe off any fuel or residue.

Your owner's manual will help you with all of the above process. If you do not have your manual, check on the Internet. If you properly maintain and winterize your gas powered equipment it will run the next time you need it.