

# Small Engine Fuel, Storage & Maintenance Guide

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Courtesy of Mattos Home Solutions, specifically for *Snowblowers, Generators, and Other 4-Stroke Equipment*

These simple practices help small engines start easier, run cleaner, and last longer—helping you go longer between repairs.

## Fuel & Storage

California fuel breaks down quickly in small engines. Use fresh 91/premium fuel each season. Gasoline can begin degrading in ~30 days, leading to starting problems and carburetor deposits.

Add Sea Foam fuel stabilizer (not Sta-Bil) to new fuel at 2–3 oz per gallon. This helps prevent fuel breakdown and keeps carburetor jets clean.

If available, ethanol-free fuel is best , since ethanol attracts moisture and can contribute to corrosion and deposits.

At season's end, pour unused fuel into an unleaded vehicle  when the tank is ½–¾ full using a fuel funnel with a strainer.

Storage Procedure:

If equipped with a fuel shutoff valve, turn it off while the engine is running and allow the engine to stop on its own (10–15 min ).

If no fuel shutoff valve: fill the tank ½ full with fresh fuel, add extra Sea Foam, and run the engine about 10 minutes.

Store equipment indoors when possible  or cover it to reduce exposure to moisture.

## Maintenance

Small engines do not have oil filters, so regular oil changes are important.

Change oil annually or every 50 operating hours .

At the start of each season, inspect shear pins, drive belts, tire pressure, scraper bar, and skid shoes .

Keep spare shear pins and drive belts  on hand to avoid downtime during storms.

## Seasonal Startup Checklist

- Check engine oil level and change if needed 
- Inspect shear pins, belts, and fasteners 
- Check tire pressure and scraper bar/skid shoes
- Add fresh 91/premium fuel with Sea Foam 
- Inspect fuel lines and primer bulb
- Start the engine and warm up for about one minute 

## Best Practices

- Use fresh 91/premium fuel 
- Gas begins degrading after ~30 days 
- Ethanol-free fuel preferred 
- Add Sea Foam (2–3 oz/gal) 
- Dispose of old fuel in vehicle tank 
- Run fuel system dry if equipped with shutoff
- If no shutoff: store with treated fuel (~10 min run)
- Turn fuel valve off when not in use 
- Change oil annually / 50 hrs 
- Inspect shear pins, belts, tires, scraper bar 
- Keep spare pins & belts 
- Store indoors or covered 

Sea Foam instructions:

<https://seafoamworks.com/help-center/how-to-use-sea-foam-in-fuel/>

## Snowblower Tips

- Use forward speeds 1–2 for most snow; 3 only for light, fluffy snow.
- Use higher gears only for moving the unit between locations.
- Snowblowers generally cannot move slush or solid ice—break up soft ice first.
- Spray cooking oil or silicone lubricant on the auger, impeller, and chute to reduce icing.
- If the chute clogs, shut the engine off and clear with a stick—never your hands .
- After the final pass, run the auger 10–20 seconds  to clear snow before shutdown.

## Mattos Home Solutions | Equipment Care Guide

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Service Tip: Most small-engine problems are caused by old fuel. Using fresh fuel with Sea Foam stabilizer and proper seasonal storage prevents most carburetor and starting issues.

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