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Turning Slow Fall Days Into Big Wins Cleaning and Maintenance Opportunities for you Carwash

As the leaves change color and the busy summer months fade, many carwash owners notice a familiar trend: slower customer traffic. While slower days in the fall might feel like downtime, savvy operators know these quieter periods can be a golden opportunity to focus on essential cleaning and maintenance tasks that keep their carwash running smoothly and efficiently.

In this article, we'll explore why fall slow days are the perfect time for deep cleaning, preventive maintenance, and small projects that often get overlooked during peak season — helping you protect your investment and get ahead of winter challenges.

Why Fall Slowdowns Happen

Fall is a transitional season for many carwash businesses. Cooler temperatures, changing weather patterns, and shifts in customer behavior all contribute to decreased car counts. People tend to wash their cars less frequently in the fall as it comes between the high-demand summer and winter seasons.

While this can impact daily revenue, it also means fewer cars rolling through your wash bay — giving your team the space and time to tackle tasks that are tough to manage when the line is out the door.

Deep Cleaning: Beyond the Daily Sweep

During peak season, daily cleaning routines focus on the essentials: sweeping floors, emptying trash, and wiping down high-touch areas. Fall's slower pace provides the opportunity to dig deeper.

1. Wash Bay and Tunnel Cleaning

Soap scum, mineral deposits, and grime build up over time in your wash tunnel and bays. Use slower days to clean conveyor tracks, nozzles, brushes, and dryer vents thoroughly. Pay special attention to water reclaim systems if you have them — clearing filters and checking for debris can improve system efficiency and water quality.

2. Vacuum and Interior Cleaning Areas

Vacuum bays and interior cleaning stations see heavy use during busy periods, but a detailed deep clean can often be delayed. Clean vacuum hoses, empty and sanitize canisters, and scrub floors and walls. Fix any broken vacuum heads or faulty equipment to enhance customer satisfaction.

3. Customer Areas

Don't forget your waiting areas, pay stations, and exterior spaces. Clean windows, wipe down kiosks, and power wash concrete or asphalt surfaces. Adding a fresh coat of paint or repairing signage can improve curb appeal and invite more customers during the upcoming busy season.

Preventive Maintenance: Protecting Your Investment

Routine maintenance during slower days is crucial to prevent costly breakdowns and service interruptions during peak times.

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Fall 2025

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Letter from the Editor



Dear HCA Members and Industry Partners,

As the leaves turn and the air grows crisp, we’re excited to bring you this fall issue of Splash, the HCA’s quarterly newsletter, packed with timely articles to help you prepare for the changing season. Inside, you’ll find expert advice on maximizing your operations during the slower fall months, tips on winterizing your equipment, and strategies to boost customer loyalty through unlimited wash plans that deliver both peace of mind and guaranteed revenue.

We’re thrilled to announce the 2026 HCA Product Show, taking place March 24–25 at the Beardmore Event Center in Bellevue, Nebraska. This year’s theme—Wash Intelligence: Where AI Meets ROI—dives into the groundbreaking technologies shaping the future of the carwash industry.

Headlining the event is our keynote speaker, Miguel Gonzalez, the President and CEO of Micrologic. Mr. Gonzales is a nationally recognized expert in artificial intelligence and business innovation. With a track record of helping companies unlock new levels of efficiency and profitability, Miguel will share practical strategies for harnessing AI in real-world carwash operations. His dynamic presentation will not only highlight what’s coming next but also give you the tools to start applying these advancements today.

This is your chance to hear directly from one of the foremost voices in AI-driven business growth—and to walk away with ideas that can immediately impact your bottom line.

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more updates as we approach what’s sure to be an inspiring and innovative event.

Thank you for being part of our community. We hope you find this issue both informative and inspiring as you gear up for a successful season ahead.

Sincerely,
Kristen Corbisiero

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41ST ANNUAL PRODUCT SHOW

Wash Intelligence: Where AI Meets ROI

SHOW AGENDA

Tuesday March 24, 2026

8:00 Registration Opens

8:00 - 12:00 Exhibitor Setup

9:00 - 10:00 Continental Breakfast AND Keynote speaker

10:00-11:00 Breakout Discussions: What's on your mind and what is going on in your business

11:00 - 1:00 Lunch

12:00 - 4:00 Floor Open and Raffle Tickets for Sale

2:00 - 3:00 Panel discussion 1

4:00 - 5:00 Show Reception & Awards w/cocktails & heavy hors d'oeuvres

5:00 - 7:00 Live Band

Wednesday March 25, 2026

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast Buffet & Annual Meeting

9:00 - 12:00 Carwash Tours, a rep from each location will ride the bus with us to offer discussion

12:00 - 1:30 SPONSORED lunch with 30 min discussion from speaker from sponsoring company

1:00 - 5:00 Floor Opens – Day 2 Specials

1:30 Raffle drawing ***Must be present to win!***

2:00 - 3:00 Panel Discussion 2

5:00 - 7:30 Exhibitor Move Out

Times and Events Subject to Change

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3730 Raynor Parkway, Bellevue, NE 68123

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1. Equipment Inspections and Repairs

Walk through every piece of equipment, from pumps and motors to brushes and dryers. Look for signs of wear, leaks, loose fittings, or electrical issues. Schedule repairs or part replacements proactively to avoid unexpected downtime.

2. Lubrication and Calibration

Mechanical components such as conveyor chains, bearings, and rollers need proper lubrication to function smoothly. Take the time to grease these parts and calibrate sensors and controls to ensure optimal performance.

3. Water and Chemical Systems

Inspect water heaters, pumps, valves, and chemical dispensers. Test water quality and chemical mix ratios to guarantee the best cleaning results and reduce waste. Cleaning or replacing filters in your water reclaim system is also a smart move before winter. Tackling Maintenance Projects

Slow days are ideal for handling projects that can't easily be completed when the carwash is bustling.

1. Painting and Sealing

Repair cracks and reseal concrete to prevent damage from freeze-thaw cycles during winter. A fresh paint job on walls, doors, or equipment not only looks good but also protects surfaces from corrosion and wear.

2. Upgrading or Installing New Equipment

Have a new piece of equipment or technology you've been meaning to add? Fall is a great time to install it without disrupting customers or sacrificing revenue.

3. Staff Training and Safety Drills

Use downtime for team training on equipment operation, safety procedures, or customer service skills. Well-prepared staff reduce risks and improve efficiency when busy season returns. Planning Ahead for Winter

Fall slow days give you the chance to winterize your carwash properly.

- Drain and protect pipes and water lines to prevent freezing.
- Check heating systems and ensure ventilation is clear.
- Stock up on winter chemicals designed for ice and salt removal.
- Develop a snow and ice management plan for your site.

Proper preparation keeps your operation running safely and smoothly even in harsh weather.

The Bottom Line: Embrace Slow Days

Rather than seeing fall slowdowns as lost opportunity, think of them as a strategic pause. By dedicating time and resources to cleaning, maintenance, and small improvements, you protect your investment, boost efficiency, and get ready to hit the ground running when business picks up again.

Your carwash will thank you with fewer breakdowns, better customer experiences, and a strong competitive edge heading into the busy seasons ahead.

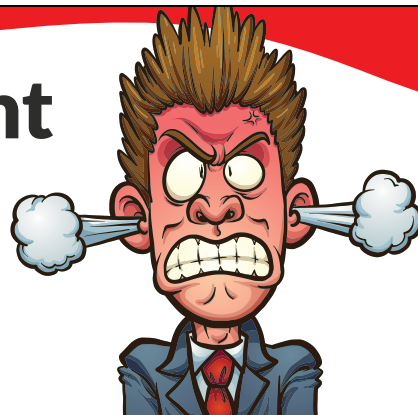
If you're ready to transform slow fall days into productive power hours, start planning your cleaning and maintenance checklist now. Your future self — and your customers — will be grateful.

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Prepping Your Carwash for Winter Essential Heating Upgrades and Maintenance



As the crisp chill of fall gives way to winter's frost, carwash operators face the challenge of keeping their facilities comfortable, safe, and fully operational despite dropping temperatures. Properly preparing your carwash for the cold months isn't just about customer comfort—it's critical to maintaining equipment functionality, preventing damage, and ensuring smooth operations.

From floor heating and bay door repairs to interior heating and heated blowers, investing time and resources into winter readiness can protect your business and enhance the customer experience. In this article, we'll walk through key heating-related preparations and upgrades to get your carwash winter-ready.

The Importance of Heating in a Winterized Carwash

Winter weather poses unique challenges for carwash facilities. Frozen floors can create slip hazards for customers and employees. Bay doors that don't seal properly allow cold air in, increasing heating costs and risking frozen pipes. Unheated interiors can make the environment uncomfortable, deterring customers from using your services. Finally, dryers that lack heat struggle to properly dry vehicles, leading to streaks, water spots, and unhappy customers.

Addressing these issues proactively with effective heating solutions helps maintain safety, preserve equipment longevity, and keeps customers coming back even when the temperature drops.

Floor Heating: Preventing Ice and Slips

One of the most critical safety upgrades for winter is installing or maintaining heated floors in wash bays and customer walkways. Heated floors help melt snow and ice, preventing slippery surfaces that can cause accidents.

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WashTalk 

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Benefits of Floor Heating:

- Keeps floors dry and safe by melting snow and ice quickly.
- Prevents freeze-thaw damage to concrete surfaces, extending their lifespan.
- Improves customer and employee safety, reducing liability risks.
- Enhances overall facility aesthetics by preventing unsightly ice buildup.

Maintenance Tips:

- Inspect floor heating systems ahead of winter for damaged or malfunctioning heating elements.
- Test thermostats and control units to ensure proper temperature regulation.
- Clear drains and check water flow to avoid pooling that could freeze.
- Schedule preventive maintenance or upgrades with professionals if your system is aging.

If your facility doesn't currently have floor heating, consider investing in electric or hydronic radiant floor heating systems designed specifically for commercial carwash environments.

Bay Door Repair and Weatherproofing

Bay doors are the gateway between your warm, heated interior and the cold outdoors, making them a focal point for heat loss and air infiltration.

Common Issues to Address:

- Gaps or cracks in door seals that let cold air in and warm air out.
- Damaged or worn weather stripping that reduces insulation.
- Misaligned doors that don't close properly or create drafts.
- Mechanical problems that prevent smooth operation, leading to prolonged open times.

Winter Prep Steps:

- Conduct a thorough inspection of all bay doors well before the first freeze.
- Replace weather stripping and seals as needed.
- Adjust door alignment and lubricate moving parts to ensure quick, tight closure.
- Consider upgrading to insulated or double-paneled doors for enhanced thermal retention.
- Install automatic door closers or sensors to minimize the time doors stay open.

Properly sealing your bay doors reduces heat loss, cuts energy costs, and keeps your facility comfortable for customers and staff.

Interior Heating: Creating a Comfortable Environment

A warm, inviting interior encourages customers to use your carwash even in the coldest months. Interior heating also protects your equipment and staff.

Heating Options:

- Forced-air heaters: Efficiently circulate warm air throughout customer waiting areas and offices.
- Infrared heaters: Provide direct radiant heat, warming people and objects without heating the entire space.
- Hydronic heating: Uses heated water running through pipes to radiate warmth in floors or walls.
- Electric baseboard heaters: Simple and cost-effective for smaller spaces.

Key Considerations:

- Ensure heating systems are sized appropriately for the space and insulation levels.
- Use programmable thermostats to optimize energy use and maintain consistent temperatures.
- Regularly inspect and clean heating units to maintain efficiency and safety.
- Supplement heating with proper insulation and draft-proofing for maximum effect.

A cozy interior increases customer satisfaction and helps maintain positive reviews and repeat business during winter.

Heated Blowers: Effective Vehicle Drying in Cold Weather

One of the biggest complaints during winter carwashes is poor drying results. Without sufficient heat, blowers struggle to evaporate water, leading to streaks, spots, and customer dissatisfaction.

Why Heated Blowers Matter:

- Heat accelerates water evaporation, providing faster and more effective drying.
- Warm air prevents freezing on vehicle surfaces immediately after drying.
- Enhanced drying reduces rewash rates, saving time and money.

Winter Preparation Tips:

- Inspect blowers for mechanical wear or damage before the cold hits.
- Test heating elements to ensure they generate adequate heat consistently.
- Clean blower fans and air intakes to maximize airflow.
- Upgrade older blower systems with modern, energy-efficient heated units if possible.
- Train staff to monitor drying quality and adjust blower settings as needed.

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Heated blowers not only improve the customer experience but also contribute to operational efficiency and profitability during winter months.

Additional Winterization Tips

Beyond heating-specific upgrades, consider these winter preparation steps to fully protect your carwash:

- **Pipe Insulation and Freeze Protection:** Insulate all exposed water lines and install heat tape or freeze sensors to prevent costly pipe bursts.
- **Water Softening and Treatment:** Winter water chemistry can affect cleaning results; maintain your water treatment systems accordingly.
- **Snow and Ice Management:** Develop a plan for snow removal and ice melting around the facility entrances and customer areas.
- **Lighting Checks:** Shorter days mean more nighttime operations; ensure all lighting is functioning properly for safety and visibility.

Conclusion

Winter can be tough on carwashes, but with proper preparation focused on heating and insulation, you can keep your facility safe, efficient, and welcoming. Investing in heated floors, repairing and weatherproofing bay doors, optimizing interior heating, and upgrading to heated blowers creates a seamless experience for your customers and protects your business assets from the harsh elements.

Start your winter prep early, schedule necessary inspections and maintenance, and consider equipment upgrades that pay off season after season. A warm, safe, and efficient carwash during the winter months sets you apart from the competition and keeps customers coming back no matter the weather.



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Maximizing Revenue and Customer Loyalty

How Unlimited Wash Plans Can Offset Fall Weather Challenges



As the seasons shift and fall weather sets in, carwash operators face a familiar challenge: unpredictable conditions like rain, mud, and bugs can lead to fewer customer visits and erratic revenue. However, this seasonal slowdown doesn't have to mean a dip in your bottom line. By promoting unlimited wash plans, you can create a steady stream of guaranteed revenue while providing your customers with peace of mind through year-round protection for their vehicles.

In this article, we'll explore how unlimited wash plans can help carwash businesses thrive during the fall and beyond, compensating for weather-driven fluctuations and building lasting customer loyalty.

The Impact of Fall Weather on Carwash Traffic

Fall weather introduces a range of variables that affect how often customers bring their cars to the wash:

- **Rain:** Frequent rain means many drivers delay washing their vehicles, leading to fewer visits. Some customers may question the value of washing a car that will be wet or dirty again the next day.
- **Mud and Dirt:** As leaves fall and rains increase, muddy roads become common. While this can increase the need for carwashes, inconsistent weather can confuse customers about when to come in.
- **Bugs:** Autumn can bring large numbers of insects splattered across windshields and grills, discouraging drivers from waiting for prime wash days.
- **Cooler Temperatures:** When it gets colder, some customers simply wash less frequently, fearing freezing water or just feeling less motivated.

All these factors combine to create a rollercoaster of customer visits during the fall months, making revenue unpredictable and customer retention a challenge.

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Writing for the carwash industry since 2006



Why Unlimited Wash Plans Are a Smart Solution

Unlimited wash plans offer a compelling solution to the challenges posed by fall weather. Here's why they work:

1. Guaranteed Revenue Stream

Instead of relying on daily or weekly walk-in traffic that can be heavily impacted by weather, unlimited plans bring in steady, predictable income. Customers pay a monthly fee, ensuring your business receives consistent revenue regardless of external conditions.

2. Increased Customer Frequency

Unlimited plans encourage customers to visit more often — even on days when they might otherwise skip a wash. This means more consistent traffic and the opportunity to upsell additional services like detailing, vacuuming, or add-ons.

3. Customer Peace of Mind

By subscribing to an unlimited plan, customers know their car will be clean whenever they want it, rain or shine. This peace of mind is a powerful selling point, especially during seasons when weather and road conditions change rapidly.

4. Competitive Differentiation

Offering an unlimited wash plan positions your carwash as a modern, customer-focused business. This can set you apart from competitors and build a loyal customer base that's less likely to shop around.

How to Effectively Promote Unlimited Wash Plans This Fall

To maximize the benefits of unlimited plans, targeted marketing and customer education are essential. Here are some strategies to consider:

1. Emphasize Weather-Protection Benefits

Use messaging that speaks directly to the challenges customers face in fall weather. Highlight how the plan covers them through rainstorms, muddy commutes, and bug season, ensuring their car always looks great.

Example Messaging:

"Don't let rain, mud, or bugs ruin your ride—our Unlimited Wash Plan keeps your car spotless all season long."

2. Showcase Convenience and Flexibility

Stress the ease of use — customers can wash as often as they want, whenever they want, with no extra cost. Convenience is key in today's busy lifestyles.

3. Offer Limited-Time Fall Promotions

Consider launching fall-specific offers, like discounted rates for new subscribers or free upgrades during the first month. Urgency drives sign-ups.

4. Use Multiple Marketing Channels

Promote plans through social media, email newsletters, in-store signage, and your website. Use eye-catching visuals of wet roads, muddy cars, and bug-covered windshields to connect emotionally.

5. Train Staff to Promote Plans

Your team can be your best salespeople. Make sure they understand the benefits and are comfortable explaining the value of unlimited plans during customer interactions.

Addressing Common Customer Concerns

When promoting unlimited plans, be prepared to answer questions or concerns:

- **"What if I don't use it enough?"**

Explain that the plan is designed for frequent washes but even infrequent visits offer savings compared to single washes, especially in messy weather.

- **"Are there any restrictions?"**

Be transparent about any limits, such as one wash per day or available wash types, to build trust.

- **"How do I cancel?"**

Offer easy cancellation policies to reduce perceived risk.

Real-World Success Stories

Many carwash operators have seen remarkable results by implementing unlimited wash plans during the fall:

- **Steady Cash Flow:** Operators report stable monthly income even when weather reduces spontaneous visits.
- **Higher Retention:** Customers renew plans year after year, reducing marketing costs and increasing lifetime value.
- **Increased Visits:** Customers visit more frequently, leading to higher sales of add-on services.

Sharing these stories in your marketing materials and on social media can help convert hesitant customers.

Operational Tips for Managing Unlimited Plans

Running unlimited plans successfully requires smart operations:

- **Track Usage:** Use software to monitor customer visits and manage capacity.
- **Maintain Equipment:** Higher wash frequency means equipment runs more often — schedule preventive maintenance to avoid downtime.
- **Upsell Opportunities:** Train staff to offer vacuum, detailing, or premium wash upgrades at the point of sale or during visits.
- **Customer Communication:** Send reminders, special offers, and tips to keep subscribers engaged and satisfied.

Looking Beyond Fall: Building Year-Round Loyalty

While unlimited plans help offset fall weather challenges, their benefits extend throughout the year. During winter, they encour-

age washes to remove salt and grime. In spring and summer, they help manage pollen and dust. Ultimately, unlimited plans create consistent customer habits that sustain your business through all seasons.

Conclusion: Seizing the Fall Opportunity

Fall weather may bring rain, mud, and bugs that challenge car-wash operators, but it also presents an opportunity to innovate and strengthen customer relationships. By promoting unlimited wash plans, you provide customers with value, convenience, and peace of mind while securing steady, predictable revenue for your business.

Investing time and effort into effective promotion, staff training, and operational management of these plans can transform seasonal slowdowns into year-round successes.

Now's the time to embrace unlimited plans — your customers (and your cash flow) will thank you.



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Welcome to the newest section of our newsletter where the suds get silly, the hoses go haywire, and even the most seasoned carwash pros find themselves in hilarious predicaments. From slippery floors to unexpected spray mishaps, this is your front-row seat to the funniest moments behind the bays.



*In an Aug 8, 2025 YouTube post from @Carwashdr, he writes:
NO VEHICLES WERE INJURED!!! Contactor for trolley
rotate got stuck when trolley drive was engaged. I laughed and
laughed and laughed because it's an easy fix and luckily no
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