

Monsoon-proof your vehicle with engine protection cover

If you own an EV, buying a battery-protection add-on would be prudent

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The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a fifth consecutive year of normal monsoon. A good monsoon, while essential, presents challenges for car owners who live in areas prone to heavy rains, floods, and water logging. Parthanil Ghosh, president-retail business, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, says, "For such geographies, it's always wise to choose a few add-ons to protect against potential damages that might unexpectedly arise during the monsoon season."

Pre-monsoon vehicle maintenance should be your first step. If you only have third-party insurance, get a comprehensive cover. Next, buy a few relevant add-ons to avoid having to pay for certain costs out of your own pocket. Let us discuss two must-have add-ons first.

Engine protection cover:

A comprehensive policy typically doesn't cover damage to the engine or the gearbox due to water logging. T A Ramalingam, chief technical officer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, says: "This add-on safeguards the engine against water ingress, leading to hydrostatic lock. It includes coverage for engine parts like the cylinder head, piston, and crankshaft, among others. These parts aren't covered unless you buy this specific add-on." Ghosh warns that repair costs can mount to several lakhs if parts of the engine have to be repaired or replaced.

Electric car owners must park their vehicles on elevated ground so that it does not remain submerged overnight. Ramalingam stresses the importance of buying a battery protection add-on cover to safeguard against the cost of replacing the battery.

Roadside assistance cover: This is another must-have cover during the monsoon. Naval Goel, founder and chief executive officer (CEO), PolicyX says, "This cover proves especially handy when your vehicle breaks down mid-

SUPERCHARGE YOUR MOTOR POLICY WITH THESE ADD-ONS

Below premiums are for a Hyundai Creta SX (O) 1.5 Petrol CVT Knight

CAR REGISTRATION YEAR: 2022

Insured declared value	₹15 lakh
Zero depreciation	₹6,000-8,000
Key lock replacement	₹100-500
Return to invoice	₹2,500-4,500

Source: PolicyBazaar

journey and is immovable. If you have this cover, a professional technician will arrive at the site to repair the damage."

Ramalingam points out that this add-on provides multiple benefits — including towing, taxi, fuel, flat tyre support, and medical coordination. A word of caution here. Always buy this cover as an add-on from an insurer. In recent times, scammers have been targeting car owners with cheap "RSA" (roadside assistance) services. Having bought these two essential add-ons, you may consider a few additional ones.

Zero depreciation add-on:

This add-on, popularly known as the bumper-to-bumper cover, is relevant during the monsoon season, with its heightened risk of vehicular accidents due to slippery roads and impaired visibility. Normally, when a vehicle gets damaged and parts have to be

replaced, the insurer pays the depreciated value of those parts. However, with a zero-depreciation coverage, the insurer bears the full cost. This add-on covers most automobile components fully, but offers only 50 per cent coverage for batteries, tyres, and tubes. The premium for this add-on depends on the vehicle's age. While some insurers offer it until the vehicle is five years old, others extend it to older



vehicles as well.

Return to invoice:

Goel explains that a return to invoice add-on will compensate you for the full invoice price of your vehicle, rather than its insured declared value (IDV), if it's stolen or damaged beyond repair. A vehicle's IDV is its depreciated ex-show-room price, which means you would only get a part of the total cost if the vehicle is stolen or irreparably damaged.

Key replacement:

This add-on covers the cost of replacing a car key, if it is lost, damaged or stolen. In high-end models, replacing the key can be expensive. Nitin Kumar, head-motor insurance, PolicyBazaar, says, "With the advent of sophisticated technologies such as Frequency-Operated Buttons (FOB), the cost of replacing the keys of luxury cars can be substantial." The insurer even compensates you for replacing the lockset, if necessary. Kumar adds, "Insurers cover the cost of replacing the key and the lock if there is an attempt at theft or vehicle break-in." On selection of appropriate add-ons, M Barve, founder, MB Wealth Financial Solutions, says, "If you own an expensive car, opt for return to invoice, zero depreciation, and key replacement covers. Owners of mid- and small-sized cars may avoid the increased premium that results from opting for these covers."



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