

Car Care Corner

The Way You Drive May Call For More Frequent Maintenance

(NAPSA)—The way you maintain your car should take into account the conditions in which you drive. That's the word from AAA, which says too many drivers underestimate the severity of their driving habits. As a result, they follow the wrong maintenance schedule.

When polled recently by AAA, only 6 percent of motorists felt they did most of their driving under severe driving conditions. But when asked about the actual driving behaviors that create severe operating conditions, 62 percent of motorists admitted they drive their vehicle that way all or most of the time.

Some of the conditions and behaviors that are considered severe include:

- Driving on short trips of less than five miles in normal temperatures or less than 10 miles in freezing temperatures.
- Driving in hot-weather stop-and-go traffic.
- Driving at low speeds of less than 50 miles per hour for long distances.
- Driving on roads that are dusty or muddy or have salt, sand or gravel spread on the surface.
- Towing a trailer, carrying a camper (if a pickup truck) or transporting items on a roof rack or in a cartop carrier.

"Manufacturers provide different maintenance recommendations for severe driving conditions because such operation increases wear on vehicle components and fluids," said John Nielsen, director of AAA Approved Auto Repair and Auto Buying Services. Maintenance schedules for severe driving conditions typically recommend changing the vehicle's fluids and filters more often, and include more frequent inspections of certain components.



A short commute in heavy traffic is only one of the severe driving conditions that could require a different maintenance schedule because of increased wear on the vehicle.

AAA advises motorists to:

- Read their owner's manual and/or maintenance booklet.
- Learn what the manufacturer considers normal and severe driving conditions for their vehicles.
- Make an honest assessment of their driving habits.
- Schedule service in accordance with the appropriate maintenance schedule.

For additional assistance in evaluating driving conditions and determining proper maintenance intervals, motorists can visit any of the more than 8,000 AAA Approved Auto Repair facilities across North America. These shops have undergone an extensive inspection and meet stringent standards for quality, ability, integrity and professionalism.

Since its founding in 1902, the AAA has been an advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. To learn more or locate a nearby Approved Auto Repair facility, visit AAA.com/repair.