



CAR CARE CORNER

Tips On Vehicle Maintenance And Repair

(NAPSA)—Here’s some car maintenance advice that will help keep your vehicle operating properly and hopefully save you money.

For starters, make sure your car has the right brakes and they’re working properly. Today’s vehicles are composed of advanced technological systems.

Brakes are part of that system and configured to interact with the other vehicle components in a certain way. Brake replacement work can be done just about anywhere, but installing aftermarket brake components not tested and designed for that particular vehicle may hurt other parts of the braking system and cause problems.

“If you have one weak link in a system, the other links have to work harder to make up for that deficiency,” said Kurt Pursche, brake systems specialist, GM Service and Parts Operations. “The least expensive component of the braking system is the brake pad, but if you skimp on the pad, it will cause the entire system as a whole to work harder, which could lead to more expensive repairs down the road.”

Replacement brake components are not regulated to any specific performance or design standards. That’s why it’s important to have brake work performed at a dealer. Goodwrench technicians go through extensive brake service training that includes familiarization with complex braking technologies such as anti-lock brakes and StabiliTrak systems. The company also offers a full line of Genuine GM Parts and ACDelco aftermarket brake products that are tested and manufactured to meet specific brake performance standards.

Chuck Greening, president, Greening Labs, Inc., and his engi-



Taking a vehicle back to the dealer for brake service can ensure you’ll get quality parts, brakes specifically designed and tested for your car, and components installed by trained technicians.

neering team have been testing and certifying aftermarket brake components from a variety of brake manufacturers for more than 40 years. They recommend consumers look for brake components that are designed and tested to meet specific performance requirements for their individual vehicle when it’s time to have brake work performed.

“There are no Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for aftermarket brakes, so getting replacement brake parts that have been tested to meet certain performance standards is essential,” said Greening. “Companies like GM come to us to certify that the brakes they offer their customers meet specific design and quality standards.”

How do you know when it’s time to replace the brakes?

There are no specific visual characteristics to determine if a car’s brakes are bad without taking the wheel off the vehicle. However, many vehicles come equipped with a small thin piece of metal attached to the brake pad that acts as a warning indicator. This device makes a chirping noise during

brake application and lets you know the brake pad is getting low and should be replaced.

Signs that a vehicle may need new brakes:

1) Poor brakes may cause whistling, squeaking, grinding or pulsing or may make the vehicle shimmy.

2) You need to press harder on the pedal to make the vehicle stop or the brake pedal can be pushed all the way to the floor.

3) The vehicle pulls to one side when pressure is applied to the brakes.

Some reasons for brake failure include excessive heat or using the wrong product on the vehicle. Heat can be caused by extreme use (such as “riding” the brakes while driving), constant use in intense conditions (such as mountain driving) or improper calibration. Extreme heat can damage brake rotors, leading to more serious and expensive problems.

Tips for making brakes last longer:

1) Replace brakes with original equipment manufacturer replacement parts designed and tested specifically for that vehicle.

2) Don’t overload the vehicle with too much cargo or a trailer it can’t handle.

3) Don’t drag the brakes while accelerating.

4) Make sure the parking brake is in good working order and test it often.

Goodwrench recommends and performs regular brake inspections as part of its Multi-Point Vehicle Inspection process every time a car is brought in for service. Additional brake replacement recommendations are outlined in the vehicle’s owner’s manual.

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