

Car Care Corner

Oil Change Intervals: Separating Facts From Friction

(NAPSA)—Here's news that can help car owners save time, money and the environment: The old 3,000-mile oil change is a conservative approach to maintaining a vehicle that's not necessarily true for the cars of today.

Automobile manufacturers say modern oil and engine technology means oil change intervals can be extended. While the oil change interval you should follow varies according to the car you drive and the way you drive it, oil and filter selection, and whether your vehicle has an oil life monitoring system, oil change intervals are now more like 5,000 to 7,500 miles for many new cars.

What's more, if your car is no longer under warranty, you can extend your oil change intervals by upgrading to synthetic motor oil.

A new technology affecting oil change intervals is the "oil life monitor," computer software algorithms that determine when to change oil based on engine operating conditions. The monitor looks at mileage, speed and idling time to calculate when you should change the oil. There is no actual oil condition sensor or chemical analysis of the oil. In fact, you could drain the oil and replace it with any fluid and the oil change monitor would have no way of knowing it. Additionally, the oil life monitor does not monitor how well your oil filter is working. Contaminated oil is just as harmful, if not more so, than oxidized motor oil. Basically, it's a useful tool that should be used with common sense and good judgment.

Fortunately, there are a number of quality synthetic motor oils available. The number of miles you can allow between oil changes will depend on the way you drive



You can drive more miles between oil changes by upgrading to synthetic motor oil and a premium oil filter.

and the oxidation stability (useful oil life) of the motor oil.

Oxidation stability is measured by the rigorous Thin Film Oxidation Uptake Test. Conventional motor oils typically last less than 300 minutes. Synthetic motor oils typically last less than 500 minutes. One high-performance synthetic motor oil, however, has been shown to outlast the 1,300-minute test. The Royal Purple motor oils are recommended to extend oil change intervals to as much as 12,000 miles under normal driving conditions. The motor oil has also been shown to improve fuel economy. You can find out more at www.royalpurple.com.

When you upgrade your motor oil, you should also upgrade your oil filter. Low-quality filters are often made with the 3,000-mile interval in mind and may go into "bypass" mode shortly thereafter. There are a number of premium oil filters on the market from manufacturers such as Royal Purple, WIX, Purolator and K&N. Check the recommended filter change interval on any filter you purchase.