

ROAD TO SAFETY

Ceramics: The Next Stop In Brakes?

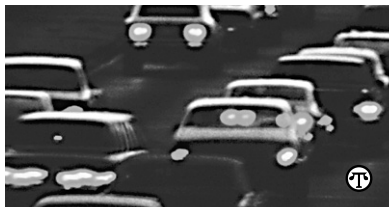
(NAPSA)—A new, innovative brake pad technology is keeping drivers happy and making the jobs of brake installers easier. Noise, vibration and brake dust concerns have historically been the greatest causes of customer angst after a brake job. Today, however, advanced ceramic brake pads are alleviating these issues for a growing number of drivers and eliminating frustrating comebacks to repair shops.

Not only are ceramic pads helping to restore vehicles' smooth, quiet stopping power to original equipment (OE) specifications, but they produce virtually no visible brake dust, resulting in cleaner wheels and tires.

In addition to maintaining original equipment performance, some drivers are even upgrading their traditional OE pads with ceramic pads to improve their vehicles' overall braking performance—and the trend is accelerating. According to a number of brake pad retailers and manufacturers, ceramic pad sales are the fastest growing segment in the aftermarket brake pad business.

Industry sales forecasts project the ultra-premium brake pad category, which is dominated by ceramic technology, to account for an estimated nine percent of all aftermarket brake pads sold in 2003. This figure is expected to jump to 18 percent by 2007.

Akebono Corporation was one of the first suppliers of advanced ceramic brake technology to



Ceramic brakes help put a stop to a number of brake noise problems.

automakers including Toyota, Honda, GM and Ford. It was also one of the first to offer ceramic pads to aftermarket brake installers. Akebono's ceramic technology is now available for virtually every domestic and import car in North America.

For most drivers, ceramic pads offer a number of performance advantages over other types of brake pads. Tests show that advanced material formulations in the leading ceramic brake pads enable them to last significantly longer than traditional brake pads in typical driving conditions. In most stopping situations, including panic stops, ceramics also provide more consistent stopping power—helping promote driver confidence.

Some ceramic pads on the market also are gentler on brake rotors than traditional pads, helping prevent brake pedal pulsation complaints, as well as costly rotor repairs.

When it comes to a successful brake job, the secret may indeed rest with asking for a ceramic solution.