

Car Care Corner

Drivers Often Ignore “Check Engine” Light

(NAPSA)—Whether you’re preparing for a long road trip or just keeping your car in tiptop shape for everyday driving, maintenance should start with listening to what your vehicle has to say.

However, on any given day, an estimated 20 million Americans are driving vehicles with an important warning indicator lit. According to a national survey by AutoZone, more than one in 10 drivers admit they drive with the “check engine” light on. A third of these said they operated their cars for more than three months even though they knew the light—a dashboard indicator that signals a malfunction in a vehicle’s engine or emissions systems—was illuminated.

“So many drivers on the road today are pushing their vehicles to the limit. It is more important than ever that they pay heed to their vehicles’ signs of distress,” said Steve Odland, AutoZone’s chairman, president and chief executive officer. “While some problems that trigger the ‘check engine’ light require the assistance of a professional technician, many others involve simple, inexpensive repairs that drivers can handle on their own.”

Supporting the fact that drivers are taxing their vehicles more than ever before, the AutoZone survey found that most driving qualifies as “severe,” with 88 percent of drivers using their cars in severe driving conditions. This is defined by the automobile industry as stop-and-go traffic, short trips, dusty environments, towing or carrying heavy loads, operating in temperature extremes, extensive idling and traveling in coastal areas. Vehicles that are operated in severe conditions require more frequent maintenance.

Car Care Tips

1. Inspect your tires at least once a month.
2. Check your wipers and washer fluid regularly.
3. Inspect your motor oil regularly.
4. Change your air filter every six months.
5. Check your coolant level.
6. Check all other fluid levels.
7. Inspect the hoses.
8. Examine the belts.
9. Clean the A/C condenser and radiator fins.
10. Double check your emergency kit. It should include a container of water, a flashlight with extra batteries, flares or reflective triangles, jumper cables, a fire extinguisher and a first-aid kit.



As a service to customers, AutoZone stores are offering a free test to interpret the cause of a “check engine” alert. “AutoZoners” equipped with special scanners connect to the onboard computer of a customer’s car to capture information about the malfunction. Armed with this report, customers can decide whether they need to take the car to a repair shop or tackle the problem themselves.

“Computer chips in today’s sophisticated vehicles actually make cars easier to diagnose and repair,” Odland said. “Our ‘check engine’ light program highlights that technology can give customers the knowledge they need to keep their cars operating safely, to reduce emissions and to increase vehicle life.”

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.AutoZone.com.