

TIPS

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MAINTAINING YOUR VEHICLE FOR SAFETY, DEPENDABILITY AND VALUE

FROM THE
**CAR CARE
COUNCIL**

The Car Care Council has developed a service interval schedule with general guidelines for the regular maintenance of: Passenger Cars, Mini vans, Pickups & SUV's. This is customary for the majority of drivers and vehicles. However, always look at your owner's manual for specific recommendations from your vehicle manufacturer.

Oil, Filters, Fluids

Engine Oil and Filter

- Check level with engine off at every fill up.
- For maximum engine life, change oil and filter every 3 months/3,000 miles

Chassis Lubrication

- Many newer cars are lubed-for-life – many others still require this service.
- Steering and suspension components may require periodic lubrication.

Fuel Filter

- Replace if restricted or water contaminated. Restricted fuel filters shorten life of fuel pump.
- Replace filter every 2 years/24,000 miles.

Engine Air Filter

- Inspect filter at each oil change.
- Replace annually or when torn, water or oil soaked, dirty or showing other signs of wear.

Automatic Transmission Fluid

- Check fluid levels with engine running and transmission in park or neutral, depending on manufacturer instructions.
- For maximum performance, change every 2 years/24,000 miles.

Differential, Manual Transmission and Transfer Case (if equipped)

- Check fluids at each oil change.
- Replace fluids every 4 years/50,000 miles using factory recommended lubricant.

Windshield Washer Fluid

- Check fluid level monthly.
- Use washer fluid only.

Power Steering Fluid

- Check fluid with engine off using either "Full Cold" or "Full Hot" indicator lines on dipstick.
- If frequent topping off is required, inspect for leaks and replace if contaminated.
- Replace fluid every 2 years/24,000 miles.

Cabin Filter

- Replace annually, or more often in areas with heavy airborne contaminants or whenever heating or cooling efficiency is reduced.

Coolant (Antifreeze)

- Check level at reservoir – never open a hot radiator cap.
- If low, add 50/50 mix of approved antifreeze/coolant and distilled water.
- Change coolant every 2 years/24,000 miles, on most vehicles.

Belts and Hoses

- Inspect hoses at each oil change and replace when leaking, brittle, cracked, rusted, swollen or restricted.
- Check the V-belts and serpentine belts for tension and condition.
- Replace when cracked, frayed, glazed or showing signs of excessive wear.
- Typically replace timing belt between 60,000 to 90,000 miles – not replacing the belt as required could cause a breakdown or serious engine damage.

Brake Service

- Check the entire brake system every year, inspecting brake linings, rotors and drums.

Brake Fluid

- Check fluid with engine off or running.
- If frequent topping off is required, inspect brake linings and check for fluid leaks.
- Replace fluid every 2 years/24,000 miles.

Tune-Up

- Replace oxygen sensor at interval as recommended in owner's manual.
- Some cars have an oxygen sensor replacement light that appears when replacement is needed – 1996 and newer cars have more than one oxygen sensor.
- Typical spark plug replacement intervals range between 30,000 and 100,000 miles depending on the vehicle and type of spark plug.

Steering, Suspension and Tires

- Inspect steering and suspension system at least annually, including shock absorbers, struts and chassis parts, such as ball joints, tie rod ends and other related components. Replace these parts if leaks, damage and loose mounting hardware are found.
- Check the pressure of all tires, including the spare, monthly.
- Check the tread for uneven or irregular wear and cuts or bruises along the sidewalls.
- Inflate tires and maintain at recommended pressure.
- Replace tires if worn or damaged.

Check Engine Light

- If check engine light comes on while driving or remains on, your vehicle may have an emissions or sensor problem and should be analyzed/diagnosed.
- If light flashes, the condition is more severe and must be checked immediately to prevent catalytic converter or other damage.

Appearance

- To prevent stripping the vehicle's wax finish, use only automotive car wash products, not dish-washing liquids.
- Polish at least twice a year to maintain and protect the finish.

Exhaust system

- Inspect for leaks, damage and broken supports or hangers if there is an unusual noise.
- Exhaust leaks can allow carbon monoxide gas into the passenger compartment.

Batteries and Cables

- If the battery is three years old or more, it should be tested and replaced if necessary.
- Battery should be securely mounted.
- Battery connection should be clean, tight and corrosion-free.

Every 3,000 Miles

- Change engine oil and replace oil filter.
- Perform multi-point inspection.
- Rotate tires every other oil change for optimal tire life.