



HE SAID SHE SAID
THEY SAID WE SAID

Many of today's vehicle problems are caused by poor maintenance practices. The following are items that the manufacturers have recommended but we feel differently.

Vehicles with "Oil Change" Indicator lights: Many later model vehicles have oil life monitoring systems that are to let you know when its time to change your engine oil to simplify your life. While this technology sounds great in theory it really is not practical when the oil monitor allows you to drive 10,000 – 18,000 km before telling you to change your oil. Here in Canada, with our fluctuations in temperature, we are considered to be in "severe" service conditions. If you read the fine print, this means you must change the oil every 5000 km. Our recommendation is that your vehicle should have an oil change every 5000 km or every 90 to 120 days which ever comes first. Under these severe conditions the additive packages in the oil begin to breakdown after 6,000 to 8,000 km. Once this happens sludge and carbon can begin to form in the crankcase and the health of the engine begins to deteriorate. The cheapest insurance for your vehicle is frequent oil changes.

The 160,000 km Spark Plug: Vehicle owners are lead to believe by automotive manufacturers that their vehicle is good for 160,000 km before requiring spark plugs or other engine maintenance items. If you read the fine print, the recommendation is to service the spark plugs every 50,000 km. Our recommendation is to inspect them to see if they are still serviceable and if so clean and re-gap them, lubricating the plug threads with anti-seize on re-installation. It has been our experience that spark plugs left in the engine for 160,000 km are severely worn. With too large of a gap the ignition spark will jump to the easiest path to a ground source on the engine, instead of across the spark plug gap, often causing carbon tracking on the ignition components, resulting in an engine misfire. Now you might have to replace more than your spark plugs if you can get them out, as they may become seized into the cylinder head and possibly break off on removal, therefore requiring costly engine disassembly to extract them.

Long life coolant: Dex-cool (GM's pink long-life coolant) claims a life expectancy of 5 years. However, here at Buehler Automotive we're finding two to three years is average. Dex-Cool's biggest problem is oxidation. When oxidation happens the metal surfaces begin to corrode, which contaminates the coolant. Now a chain reaction occurs and the system degenerates (becomes acidic) and it loses cooling efficiency and is no longer compatible with certain engine gasket materials resulting in deterioration of the gasket causing coolant leaks. At this time the most common vehicle we see, with an engine coolant leak at the intake manifold is a GM vehicle with a 3.4 Litre engine. A simple observation you can make to check the health of your coolant is to check the radiator cap and neck for sludge build up. If sludge is present, it's time for a coolant exchange.

The importance of regular maintenance cannot be stressed enough. An appropriate saying "if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is" also pertains to vehicle maintenance. If you have any questions about service intervals or need a service clarified, please call.