

SERVICE INTERVALS VERSUS OIL CHANGE PERIODS

With improved engine technology resulting in increased service intervals, many drivers feel a false sense of security when it comes to the life of their engine oil.

Today's engines, if properly maintained, can achieve as much as 500,000 kilometres without major overhauls. That equates to more than twice the distance that can be travelled when compared to a poorly maintained vehicle.

DID YOU KNOW?

Different driving habits and conditions can greatly affect the life of your engine oil and consequently the life of your engine. If you regularly travel less than 20 kilometres each trip, your driving habits require you to change your oil more regularly than you may think.

- ◆ It takes about 20 kilometres from a cold start to fully warm up the engine oil and reduce the rate of fuel contamination.
- ◆ These short trips cause engine oils to become saturated with contaminants. If your vehicle isn't given adequate time to expel these contaminants, they will destroy the oil's ability to protect your engine.
- ◆ Car trips less than 20 kilometres increase fuel dilution and result in engine oil thinning. Fuel enters the oil on cold start-up and is not vaporised out because the engine has not had time to reach normal operating temperature.
- ◆ If you often take short trips to work, the train station, school, or the shopping centre, your vehicle faces increased risk of engine wear and damage compared to those that travel longer distances. Approximately 80% of vehicles fall into this category.
- ◆ Generally, a vehicle that often travels less than 20 kilometres per trip should have an oil change every 5000 to 7500 kilometres, or every six months (whichever comes first).
Topping up an engine low on oil is not the same as giving it an oil change.
- ◆ Contaminants increase in concentration each time the oil level drops which accelerates engine wear.
- ◆ Many modern engines have reduced oil sump capacities causing the oil to be placed under stress because of a lower cooling capacity. This makes combating acid formation and oil sludge more difficult. Frequent oil changes are therefore essential to minimise the negative effects on your engine associated with oil stress.

To protect your investment, take the time to check your vehicle's manual or talk to your service adviser to identify what your driving habits and conditions are and how they may affect your oil – even between regular service periods.

By doing this, you will maximise the life of your engine, help minimise vehicular pollution and save yourself thousands of dollars in car repair fees.