

ARE YOU KILLING YOUR CAR?

STOP the MADNESS!!!

Learn how you might unknowingly be killing your car and HOW to prevent it.



Special Report

Are you killing your Car? Stop the Madness!

Learn how you might be unknowingly killing your car and how to prevent it.

Taking Charge of your Automobile

The decision to maintain your vehicle is often a toss-up between keeping your investment working correctly so you can get from point A to B , or spending your money on something else. In most cases, vehicle maintenance goes to the back burner.

Your Vehicle Could Last FOREVER

Today’s vehicles are capable of lasting a long time with proper maintenance. With the advancement in technology and the introduction of electronics in place of components that were once mechanical, vehicles are more efficient, use less fuel and produce less waste making them last longer and perform better for longer. However, vehicle components are built lighter and have a lot tighter tolerances making the vehicle more economical and efficient *but* also making it bad for the ability to rebuild components. Through proper care, these components have the ability to last forever, but unlike the old cast iron heavy duty ones of the past, pushing these components and expecting them to last just isn’t possible.

Knowing this, the consumer can understand that a vehicle is capable of lasting a very long time without causing stress and without emptying the bank account. It is affordable and I am going to teach you how.

Get to Know your Vehicle

It’s time to get to know more about your vehicle. Go out and grab your owner’s manual. Go to the section that illustrates the required maintenance of the vehicle. The manufacturer will typically provide two choices in schedules: Normal or Severe Duty. A “**Normal Schedule**” is the ***minimum maintenance*** that should be done to ensure that your vehicle makes it through its warranty period.

“Severe duty” applies to one of the following from the list below:

- Frequent short trips driving less than 5 km
- Frequent driving in dusty conditions
- Extensive idling
- Trailer towing
- Sustained high-speed operation
- Off-road driving
- Frequent starting and stopping
- Cold climate operation (under -23C)
- Commercial service
-

Typically severe duty schedules have shorter time and kilometre intervals 5000-8000km versus the normal schedules 10,000-12,000km. Now is a good time to tell you know that especially in Northern BC, 90% of vehicle owners should classify themselves as severe duty.

Spending money on maintenance has to be about more than just getting through the manufacturer’s warranty period. Choosing the right maintenance plan and being educated as to what options are available will allow your vehicle to perform longer making it a lot less likely to experience a mechanical breakdown.

You Make the Choice

First off, maintenance schedules vary between manufactures. Some manufactures claim that their vehicle schedules can be stretched as far as 20,000km on one oil change. This may be true for a brand new vehicle, but as the vehicle ages, the wear and tear catches up quickly. Pushing the maximum intervals for maintenance would only make sense if the owner were not interested in keeping the vehicle past its warranty. For the manufacturer of the vehicle, this makes sense because they will sell more cars but for the person making the car payments, its time *you* were the one to make this choice. If your interest is to make the car last for years past the last car payment, to have the vehicle be reliable, dependable and economical, than proper care has to start at the beginning of the cars life.

List of Vital Components

Start with taking good care of each component. This is a list of the components that **never** need to wear out:

1. **Engine oil** - not allowing sludge and debris to build up in your engine is your goal. Your engine has a pump just like your heart. Your heart pumps your blood through all your arteries delivering oxygen to all your vital organs. The engine works the same way. Your engine has many small arteries in which oil has to travel through to get to vital parts of the engine. If the arteries get restricted than damage begins to occur.

“Don’t push your engine oil until its black.” Today’s vehicles have an electronic message that tells you when to change your oil. It is computed using idling time, driving habits and distance travelled. I personally do not ever exceed 8000km on my engine oil. Change the oil before it completely breaks down and you will prevent premature failure of your engine. A good recommendation to follow is every 8000km or 4 months, whichever comes first.

2. **Engine cooling** - Your cooling system is so important. Each cylinder can reach temperatures of 500 C. The job of your coolant is to absorb the heat and transfer it to the radiator to be cooled. Coolant is a formulation of chemical additives and water. The coolant is heated and cooled thousands of times in its life, and with this process, the coolant starts to deteriorate. It’s a lot like a kettle - after boiling water over and over again, you will notice the formation of debris that is left behind. The importance of removing this sediment is done through a coolant flush. The thermostat should be replaced at the same time as well as the rad cap should be inspected. Having a properly operating cooling system will drastically improve the life of an automobile. A good recommendation for long life coolant is never exceed 5 years or 100,000 km.

3. **Transmission** - the transmission never needs to fail. Clean fluid and filter replacement will prevent premature failure of a transmission. Heat is the biggest killer of transmissions. That is why when planning to pull a trailer, it is recommended to replace the oil more frequently. A good recommendation would be to flush the complete transmission quantity of oil and replace both spin on and sump filters every 48,000.
4. **Drive axles** - The differentials do not have life time oil in them as much as the manufacturer may recommend. If you choose to follow that recommendation of lifetime oil, the differentials lifespan will be a lot shorter than what it was capable of having. By keeping clean oil for the bearings to run through, the odds of premature failure taking place are greatly reduced. A good recommendation is every 48000km. If the option is available to do a suck and fill service vs. a pan drop and fill, choose to spend the extra on a pan drop and fill. The pan drop allows full exposure to all internal components allowing a more complete service.
5. **Power steering systems** - Hydraulic power steering systems are made of pumps, steering gears and hoses. When a failure takes place, all the components are affected because these systems have no filtration to remove harmful contaminants. The only way to remove contaminants that are flowing through the system is to perform a power steering flush. ***Very rarely will this service be found in the owner manual*** as a recommended service but the importance of it should not be overlooked. This service should be performed every 48,000km.
6. **Air conditioning systems:** Even the air conditioning system needs maintenance. Every year the air conditioning system will lose a small percentage of its coolant which will eventually add up to a loss of cool air. It also requires an oil change as it uses a synthetic type oil that is circulated throughout the system lubricating the vital components. In order to keep the air conditioning serviced, first identify if your vehicle has a cabin air filter. A cabin air filter will filter all incoming air into the cabin trapping all the dust and small particulates that is unseen to the

human eye. Replace your cabin air filter every 24, 000 km or once a year. The reason the manufacturer started building vehicles with cabin air filters was that it prevented the build-up of harmful dust, allergens and bacteria from entering the heating and cooling systems. Replacing the filter will promote clean air as well as you **won't get that smell like a wet dog** every time you crank your air conditioning on. Servicing your air conditioning system will have to be done using specialized equipment and requires a trained technician holding a CFC/HCFC/HFC licence. The pressures and environmental responsibility is critical when servicing these systems. Perform this service every 48,000km. The service includes removing all the refrigerant, synthetic oil, removing all moisture from the system and recharging it with clean, dry, cold air. Many manufactures don't recommend the servicing of this system and in my experience that is a mistake because repairing a failed air conditioning system can cost thousands of dollars. A service is extremely affordable and prevents the risk of this happening.

You are in Control

Taking an interest in your vehicles maintenance can prove to be very cost affective. The more you can learn about your vehicles make up, the better in control you will become. What plan you should follow **is what you need to determine.**

Do you have a Dealership Plan?

If you have purchased a maintenance plan at your dealership than now is the time for you to investigate what you have paid for. **Don't think of these services as free oil changes** just because you paid for it when you bought your car. Many consumers will find that staying at the manufacturer/ dealership where the car was bought has left them following one of the most minimum maintenance schedules in the industry. The perception of low cost maintenance is just that - It is low cost because it is the **minimum** amount of service.

Don't Get Caught

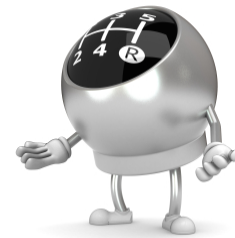
In our experience, too often customers are frustrated when I as a service technician have to tell them that their vehicles fluids are often overdue and the vehicle is in disrepair. This commonly happens right after the warranty has just expired. So many times after the last car payment was made, these vehicles arrive in my service bays for maintenance. The customers tell me that all the maintenance is up to date and they have been following a maintenance plan since it was new, just to find out that their vehicles are contaminated with expired oil and the vehicle is on its way to retirement, many times requiring substantial repairs.

Great for the Dealer

Mission accomplished from the manufactures point of view because now the consumer feels their vehicle is no longer reliable and dependable which in turn causes them to march right back to the dealership where a salesman ***talks them into a trade in on a new vehicle.***

STOP THE MADNESS!

YOU are in charge of your vehicle, your warranty is yours to maximize on and it is time you make good choices.



In order to make your vehicle last a long time, perform the severe maintenance schedule in your manufacturer's book. For your convenience, I have created a chart that displays what your manufacturer's book is saying in an easy to read format.

On our website www.napapg.com, go to "**Vehicle Chart**" and look at the manufacturer comparisons we have developed. This information is straight from your vehicles maintenance books and from the manufacturer's web sites. It is accurately based on the required maintenance as well as the recommended intervals following the premium maintenance schedule.

What I am sharing with you in this article is what I have experienced in the industry for 15 years. I have seen and learned a lot working with automobiles and would like to see that through education our customers, consumers and the public at large can make better choices because they are receiving the *whole* story. It is very hard to interpret your vehicle maintenance schedule; you should have a lot of questions, because when I was researching all the different manufactures, I had a lot of questions. I am committed to the integrity of our facility. I would encourage you to take a minute to look at what your vehicle is costing you to operate. And ask yourself if you ***are truly getting the maximum value for your dollars*** spent.

To learn more about what Jeff and the team at **NAPA AutoPro** Gears Plus visit our website www.napapg.com or drop in for a visit at:

NAPA AutoPro Gears Plus

#1 – 1965 1st Avenue

Prince George, BC

across from the Nechako Bottle Depot.