

Oiling the wheels of happy motoring!

Oiling the wheels of happy motoring!

Love it or hate it, advanced technology in cars is here to stay. The only trouble is motorists are becoming overly reliant on engine sensors and warning lights on their dashboard which could lead to a host of potential highway horrors, especially when it comes to checking oil.

The message is simple. Don't avoid oil checks and rely on sensors to identify problems. That's the advice from the UK-wide Good Garage Scheme.

Why do I need oil?

Engine oil is mainly used to lubricate the internal surfaces of an engine, reducing friction, heat and wear. The oil cleans and coats the moving parts of the engine and using the correct grade oil is crucial in ensuring the engine is protected and can operate efficiently. Contamination from by-products of combustion, unburnt fuel and moisture are absorbed by the oil for removal at the next oil change.

Do I wait for the warning light to come on?

In a nutshell, no! Waiting for a warning light relating to a vehicle's oil levels is not the way to look after your engine. Oil levels should be checked regularly and failing to check oil can cause major problems for your vehicle. Typical problems include engine wear, which shortens the engine's lifespan, and noisy engine components. On the home page of the Good Garage Scheme website are details of a 'check Your Oil' campaign and a step by step guide to checking your oil.

Research has revealed:

- " 50 per cent of vehicles require regular oil top ups.
- " One in five vehicles are low on oil.
- " 25 cars a day are ruined due to lack of oil.
- " Eight out of 10 cars checked recently needed oil top ups.
- " New cars are as much at risk as old ones.
- " No warranty covers repairs caused by lack of oil.

According to Warranty Direct, drivers in the UK risk a potential average bill of more than £1,400 by not checking their oil.

Furthermore, research carried out for Halfords' National Oil Check Campaign in June and July by www.CheckYourOil.co.uk shows that almost 50% of cars – a staggering 15 million – are either low or dangerously low on oil, mostly owing to the 1 in 3 drivers who never carry out this basic task.

What can I do to help?

The Good Garage Scheme suggests checking your oil on a weekly basis to help prevent problems. Driving conditions and extended service intervals can have a major impact on the oil protecting an engine. Vehicles with extended service intervals could be at higher risk of reduced engine

protection. Oil contamination problems such as oil burning, noisy hydraulic valve lifters and

sticking variable valve timing are becoming common concerns. Cleaning the engine with a suitable engine flush and carrying out oil change intervals suitable to the type of driving conditions,

will help maintain a clean and efficient engine.

What happens if I run into problems?

Simply logon to www.goodgaragescheme.com and type in your postcode to find your nearest Good Garage Scheme member garage. A self-regulatory body for independent workshops and MOT centres, the Scheme ensures the best industry standards are maintained by its members. It has more than 2,900 members who adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and offer an Industry Standard Service.

Good Garage Scheme members:

- " Adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and pledge to have their customers best interests at heart

- " Must agree what work needs doing with their customers before it is carried out

- " Work to an Industry Standard Service checklist

- " Must supply each customer with a feedback card allowing them to give their views on service directly to the Good Garage Scheme, which operates a stringent complaints procedure

The Scheme also operates a customer feedback system, highlighting the areas of best practice and areas for improvement which are identified by motorists using member garages for work. A five-star rating system is produced for each member garage on the Good Garage Scheme website www.goodgaragescheme.com, based on the feedback forms, to help future customers find the best workshop in their area.

Nationally, the Good Garage Scheme receives around 12,000 customer feedback forms every month while member garages that fail to submit any feedbacks are investigated and potentially removed from the scheme.

- " Further information can be found by visiting www.goodgaragescheme.com