



Why a clean air filter is important in your vehicle

Motorists routinely check their tires for proper inflation, top off engine fluid levels and maintain oil change schedules. But some drivers do not understand the importance of keeping engine air filters clean.

Engine air filters are a relatively inexpensive vehicle part, but they perform a very important job. For every gallon of gas a car burns, it uses the equivalent of 12,000 gallons of air, and that air must be filtered to help keep an engine clean. Air filters catch all of the dust, grime, insects, sap, leaves, and any other debris that may get sucked up past the air intake of the vehicle's grill and into the engine itself. Without the air filter, those contaminants may compromise the engine, causing corrosion and abrasion. If the air filter in the engine becomes too dirty and is not changed regularly, the engine is starved of air.

Clean air filters allow just the right ratio of air to fuel to enable the engine to function properly. Engines need adequate air for the combustion process to take place. Without the proper combustion levels, vehicles cannot perform properly or efficiently and the engine may burn more gas or get fewer miles to the gallon. A dirty filter also can rob

an engine of power. Drivers may notice sluggish acceleration.

Air filters also can get so dirty that the engine stalls completely. But such a problem only develops after considerable neglect.

Air filters may not need to be replaced at each and every oil change service call. Many technicians advise replacing the filter every 8,000 miles. However, drivers who live in particularly dry and dusty regions may need to replace filters more frequently.

Mechanics can often detect when an air filter needs to be replaced. If he or she notices the air filter is particularly dirty, then it's probably time to replace it.

Replacing the filter is a relatively inexpensive repair for the amount of performance and peace of mind a new filter provides.



Don't forget headlights when performing routine maintenance

Veteran and even novice drivers understand the importance of visibility when they get behind the wheel of their vehicles. When visibility is not an issue, drivers can more easily see their fellow motorists and better anticipate potentially dangerous situations. But when visibility is compromised, drivers and their passengers are vulnerable to a host of dangers, including inclement weather and aggressive motorists. Many things can affect drivers' visibility on the road, but those who take a proactive approach to improving their visibility can put themselves in a better position to handle any negative situations that may arise. One of the ways to do just that is to pay more attention to your headlights. Often overlooked when performing routine vehicle maintenance, headlights must be maintained to ensure optimal visibility for drivers.

The following are a few ways drivers can improve the performance of their headlights to make their vehicles safer for themselves and their passengers.

- Pay attention to the headlights' output. Perhaps the most noticeable indicator of an aging headlight is its light output. As bulbs start to dim, drivers may find themselves struggling to see during twilight and at night. That difficulty is not necessarily because drivers' own vision is failing, but may be a result of aging bulbs whose light output is gradually reduced by the effects of humidity, electrical resistance and filament fatigue. Drivers who notice their headlights are not producing as much light as they once did should know that reduced output is a telltale sign of aging bulbs that need to be replaced.

- Say "so long" to the status quo. Recognizing dimming bulbs is just the first step toward improving the performance of your headlights. The next step is for drivers to recognize that all headlight



bulbs are not created equal. Instead of replacing existing bulbs with the same type of bulbs provided by their vehicle's manufacturer, drivers can vastly improve their visibility by upgrading to a bulb designed to provide more light than the standard halogen bulbs found in many of today's vehicles. Leading automotive lighting manufacturer Philips produces a range of Upgrade Headlight Bulbs that offer up to 100 percent more light on the road than standard halogen bulbs. That's a significant benefit to drivers, as motorists' visual acuity is reduced by 70 percent at night, when statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicate 49 percent of all fatal accidents occur. The NHTSA also notes that the fatality rate per mile driven at night is roughly three times as high as it is during daylight hours.

- Find the right fit. The right headlight bulb can dramatically improve visibility when driving at night, but what's good for the goose is not always good for the gander. That's because motorists drive for various reasons and on various roads, so the right bulb for seniors who don't often take to the highways will not necessarily be the best fit for commuters who routinely drive long distances. Philips makes a headlight bulb for every type of driver, and each Upgrade Headlight Bulb creates a better beam pattern that is dramatically longer than that provided by standard halogen lights, ensuring drivers can safely see no matter how accustomed they are to driving at night.

- Let there be light. Regardless of how effective a bulb has the potential to be, drivers who don't routinely clean their headlights will continue to have their visibility compromised. Certain preventative measures can help drivers address headlight issues before they appear, ensuring their visibility is not compromised. When checking your oil in the driveway or even when you're filling up at the gas station, take a few moments to inspect your headlights and address any issues that arise as soon as possible.

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