

## Owner neglect: An automatic transmission's worst enemy

Of all the services and components overlooked by car owners, transmission maintenance remains the most neglected area in the care of an automobile. This neglect prevails, says Car Care Council, despite the risk of costly repairs.

A recent survey of transmission specialists, conducted by the Council, revealed that the principal reason for the need for a transmission overhaul is the lack of proper maintenance.

According to one transmission specialist, "People just drive around unaware of their transmission problems. Very few people bring their cars in for routine maintenance. They drive their cars until they stop running. In fact, tow-ins are the ma-

jority of our work." This lack of preventive maintenance on the part of the car owner often can cost him plenty.

The single most common cause of damage to the transmission is overheating of the fluid, usually caused by heavy trailer towing without equipping the vehicle with a transmission cooler, or by excessive rocking of the car when stuck in mud or snow.

Periodic transmission service can save motorists expensive repair bills. Standard service takes an overview of the basic elements in a transmission's operation and includes fluid change, installation of a new filter and necessary adjustment.

## Catalytic converter falls a prey to car care neglect

One of the "hottest" automobile replacement items for the balance of the '80s may be the catalytic converter. This is the part of the exhaust system which turns poisonous exhaust gases into harmless carbon dioxide and water.

Looking much like a muffler, its stainless steel casing contains chemical and/or metallurgical devices to react on the lethal elements of exhaust gas. Originally designed to have a 50,000 mile life span, they're doing much better than that when the vehicle is properly maintained.

Essentially there are three things that can destroy the converter. First and foremost is the use of leaded gas. The lead "poisons" the catalyst, making it ineffective.

The second catalyst killer is engine trouble, usually malfunctions due to improper maintenance. Incomplete burning of fuel, often a result of misfiring spark plugs or improper carburetion, will cause the con-

verter to heat up to a point where the inside can actually melt.

The third reason for replacing a converter is normal "wear-and-tear," including rust or damage to the unit itself. Sometimes a converter will fall off because of broken brackets supporting the exhaust system.

Replacement of the catalytic converter on an average mid-size six cylinder car could be \$250-\$300, including installation. New product developments, however, will help bring the price down.

These are good reasons for practicing preventive maintenance, says the Car Care Council. The car owner who fails to keep his engine in tune, thereby destroying the inside of the converter, now has a car that runs poorly and pollutes the air. If he doesn't have the catalytic converter replaced, the result could be burned valves due to back pressure in the exhaust system.

Preventive car care pays off.

## Nissan dealer started small

Norm Coulter has come a long way with the family business he started up 23 years ago in Milton.

From what was just a BP gas station, Mr. Coulter and his wife Donna have developed the Northend Nissan business into a full service facility with five full time mechanics doing car repairs, a Nissan

showroom, and a Gulf gas bar.

"We've been a Nissan dealer for 17 years now," Mr. Coulter said, ever since he saw the line at the 1969 Sportsman show.

From the basic Micra, which sells at \$8,556, to the \$30,000 300ZD sports coupe, Mr. Coulter's got it all.

He says his best seller

is the Sentra four door five passenger car.

"We've just gone through an expansion of our showroom to 1,200 square feet," Mr. Coulter said. The expansion also upgraded facilities at 610 Martin St. in Milton.

Next week, the business will also become a franchise outlet for the CanTel cellular tele-

phones. Mr. Coulter has lived in Milton since 1946.

"It's a matter of hard work and sticking to it," he says of his business success, wiping the grease off his hands.

He's his own customer as well, driving a Nissan pick-up truck.

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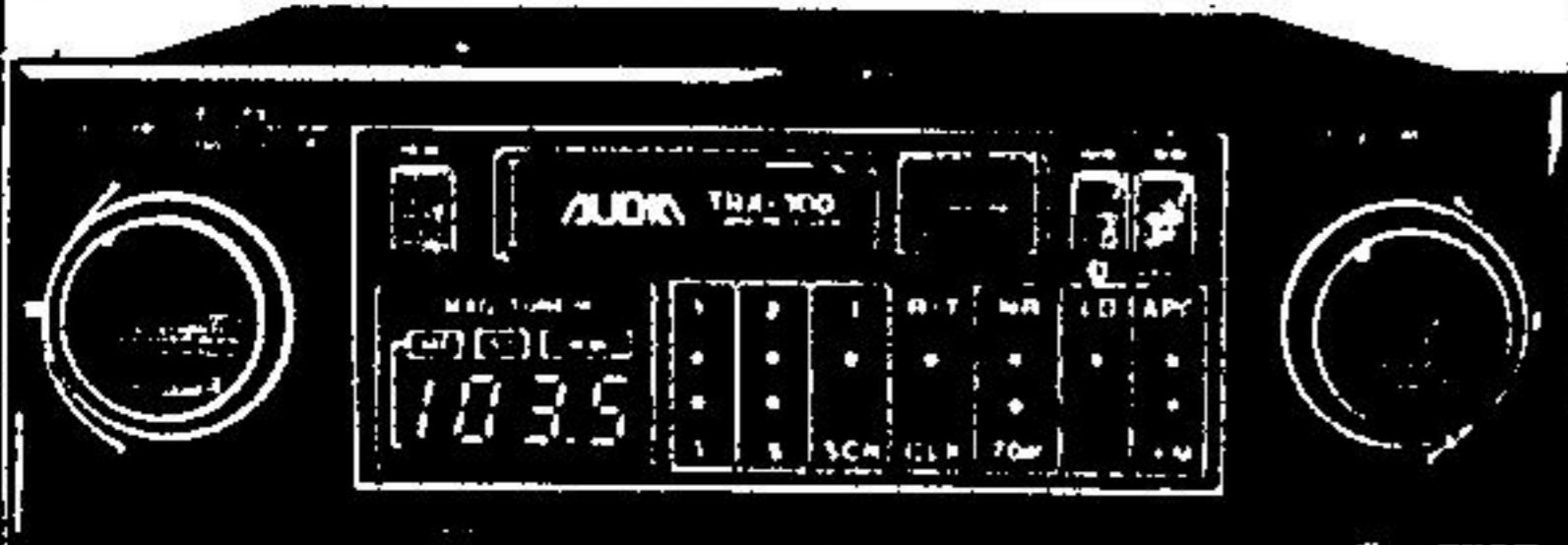
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