

Maintenance tips for diesel-powered light trucks

The most popular cars in America today are light trucks, filling the void left by the demise of the big suburban station wagon, and answering the commercial need for economical, utilitarian vehicles.

A goodly number of those light trucks are powered by diesel engines, an option favored by buyers looking for power, durability and 25 to 50 percent better mileage.

Some commercial fleet orders are coming in at better than 50 percent diesel, a testimonial to the diesel engine's competitive price and traditional low operating cost.

Diesel powered vehicles with 100,000 miles on the odometer are not uncommon, and some have gone 200,000 miles.

Diesel engines require less maintenance because there are no spark plugs, distributor points or condensers. It is important, however, to use good quality fuel and oil to protect the diesel engine's precision components from water or debris in the fuel.

Diesel fuel/water separators, available at most auto supply stores, help prevent a buildup of water in diesel fuel.

Water carries contaminants such as

rust and dirt that can ruin vital engine parts. The most common cause of fuel problems is water, which is the only fuel property the vehicle owner can control.

Spliced into the fuel line before the fuel heater, the water separator removes water from the fuel line by gravity. The best water separators include a dashboard indicator that signals a buildup of water in the unit. A drain valve allows easy purging of collected water.

Winterizing your diesel-powered light truck can improve its cold weather performance and fuel economy, according to Stanadyne Diesel Systems, the leading U.S. manufacturer of diesel fuel injection components.

Add-on fuel heaters, also available at most auto supply stores, can help prevent hard starting and rough diesel engine performance in cold weather.

Diesel fuel contains a waxy substance that can crystallize when temperatures fall below 30°F (1°C). These crystals can block fuel lines, clog fuel filters and impair engine performance. In some cases, excessive fuel "waxing" can stop an engine completely.

Diesel fuel heaters help prevent fuel waxing. The most widely available models are electrically powered by the vehicle's battery and automatically begin to heat fuel when the ignition is on. The unit automatically shuts off when fuel is warmed sufficiently.

The in-line fuel heater is easily spliced into a fuel line, and requires one simple electrical connection.

Many diesel-powered light trucks have, as standard equipment, fuel heaters and water separators such as Stanadyne's Model 80 "Fuel Sentry."

The Model 80 provides a complete fuel treatment system in one package that is effective in even the most severe driving conditions.

The Model 80 is the only product available that contains in one element a two-stage filter, a coalescing water separator, an electric "water-in-fuel" sensor and a thermally switched 100 watt fuel heater.

For trucks without factory-installed diesel fuel heaters and water separators, add-on kits are very effective and easy to install.

Car repair in the '80's

Traditionally, fall has been a favorite time of the year for do-it-yourselfers to service their own cars and light trucks. Summer's heat has passed, affording eager would-be mechanics a comfortable weekend afternoon during which to work, and winter is on the way, lending a sense of urgency to such tasks as radiator flushing and battery maintenance.

But many tinkerers are discovering that they are not up to the task. One only has to lift the hood of a car today to see the technological advances which make repairs complicated at best — and mistakes can be costly. For example, failure to follow the manufacturer's directions for a task as seemingly simple as a jump start can knock out the car's computer. The cost: \$150 to \$400.

Even working mechanics are sometimes stumped by these newer high-tech systems.

Incorrect use of a test light while checking for current in a circuit can destroy the circuits. Some modern brakes require a special bleeding sequence; failure to follow the sequence will result in poor braking. On-board computers sometimes send out conflicting or confusing signals; the mechanic needs to be a master diagnostician.

What is the average motorist expected to do? Having been cautioned about blundering under the hood himself and advised that some shade-tree mechanics are not knowledgeable enough to solve today's auto repair problems, how can he find good, competent automotive service and repair?

One solution is to look for automotive technicians certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

CAR CARE



Cooling system failure is the number one cause of car breakdowns, so preventive maintenance is essential. Regular checks and maintenance can help prevent costly breakdowns from occurring.

Ziebart, the inventor of engineered rust protection, is also the nation's largest chain of cooling system specialists. They can help consumers with all their radiator and air conditioning needs, from emergency repairs to spring and fall cooling system tune-ups and checks.

Ziebart factory-trained technicians are knowledgeable, helpful and can answer all your questions. And with many locations nationwide, Ziebart is easy to find and easy to get to.

Ziebart Corporation offers many useful tips in its free consumer booklet on cooling systems.

One tip advises consumers to get their vehicle's air conditioning checked at least once a year. Another tip warns consumers not to add refrigerant themselves.

The existing refrigerant should be drained and the cooling system vacuum-pumped to remove any air. Then new refrigerant should be added.

The booklet also points out that it is a good idea to run your air conditioning once during the winter to lubricate the compressor with refrigerant. The compressor can be damaged when it's turned on after not operating all winter.

Getting set for better driving efficiency

When the going gets cold this winter, make sure your car keeps going. Get it ready now for better driving efficiency and improved economy. Start with this easy-to-follow checklist.

Coolant: Be certain it is strong enough for cold temperatures. Drain and flush cooling system if coolant appears rusty. Periodically add water to maintain proper coolant and water mix.

Engine oil: Truly the lifeblood of your car. Check for proper oil level by reading oil dip stick found near oil fill cap. Keeping oil level full helps your car run more efficiently. This can now be easily and cleanly done by using Kendall

Superb 100 10W-30 or 10W-40 Gasoline Saving Motor Oil in handy FUN-L-FIL resealable one-quart plastic containers.

A consistently "full" oil level adds to overall engine performance. For diesel car owners, Kendall Super DSL, the motor oil engineered for automobile diesel engines, offers complete diesel engine protection.

Oil change: It should be near oil change time especially at summer's end. Changing oil regularly at every 3,500 miles helps engines run better because 90 percent of driving is stop-and-go variety, creating higher running temperatures and increased wear on the engine as well as

the oil.

Carburetor and choke: Clean the carburetor and reset the choke to avoid overfueling and a loss of fuel economy. A malfunctioning choke will cause difficult start-up in cold weather.

Warm up from a cold start: Avoid extended idling at warm up especially in cold weather. Allow 15 seconds then proceed at moderate speed. This will hasten warm up, permitting oil to better circulate through engine. Don't gun or race engine!

Grease: Clean wheel bearings of grease and repack with fresh, high quality wheel bearing grease to defend against water and road salt.

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