

By turning back the hands of time, "clockers" make the miles disappear

It looks good. The upholstery is clean. The paint job is freshly polished. There are no visible flaws and it drives like a dream. "Only 58,000 miles," the salesman says proudly.

But is that car really as young as it looks, or is it the victim of a "clocker"—a sophisticated thief who steals the miles from your odometer, often without leaving a shred of evidence behind?

Big business

"Clocking" is big business. An estimated three million cars annually have their odometer readings rolled back, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Usually, these are late-model, high-mileage vehicles. They look good because they usually have highway miles, but so many miles that they are not able to command a high resale price.

The problem is of particular concern at wholesale auctions where used automobiles are sold in fleets by the hundreds of thousands.

Auctions such as Anglo American Auto Auctions Inc. are responding by banning dealers known to have been involved in odometer tampering in the

past, and by requiring dealers who sell tampered vehicles to repurchase the car and reimburse the buyer for handling expenses.

"But tampering is so hard to detect that we need Federal legislation to close the door on clockers forever," says Gary Dickinson, Director of Security for Anglo American.

If a car's mileage has been reduced, the auto's title mileage reading also must be changed. Often this is done by "washing" the title—erasing, altering or whitening-out the title's mileage recording, giving inspectors some clue that the odometer has been tampered with.

Difficult to detect

However, more and more clockers will throw away the old title and replace it with a blank one from another state, filling in the "new" mileage to correspond with the tampered odometer. In such cases, odometer tampering is almost impossible to detect, because states are not required to retain mileage records.

"We want that changed," says Dickinson. His company is supporting two bills that would close the clockers' loopholes by requiring states to obtain annual up-

dates of mileage readings.

"Odometer tampering costs consumers over \$3 billion a year. That is why Federal odometer tampering legislation is crucial for consumers."

Dickinson recommends consumers write their U.S. Senators and House representatives to urge their support of the bills. The address is: U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, or House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

In the meantime, Dickinson advises consumers use the following precautions when purchasing a used car:

- Have a trusted mechanic inspect the vehicle before purchasing;
- Call the previous owner to verify the mileage;
- Exercise caution if the vehicle's title shows erasures, varying ink colors, differing type styles or white-out in the space provided for mileage.

Buyer beware

However, even with these precautions there is little to nothing to keep you from being taken by a fraudulent seller, Dickinson says. "Until we get Federal legislation to protect consumers from odometer tampering, there is no way to guarantee the odometer is correct. Buyer beware."

Take this transmission quiz

Would you know what to do if you suspected transmission problems? Take this quiz from Car Care Council and find out.

1) Your car makes a "clunking" sound when, with foot on brake, you move the shift lever from drive to reverse and back to drive. Since it's a rear drive vehicle, you know the trouble probably lies in the:

- A. Rear axle;
- B. Transmission;
- C. Universal joints.

2) You take your car in for a transmission fluid and filter change. The mechanic shows you metal filings in the bottom of the pan and tells you that you have major problems. You should:

- A. Have him proceed with repairs at once;
- B. Ignore his diagnosis and keep on driving the car as it is;
- C. Get a second opinion.

3) Upon checking the transmission fluid, you discover it has turned brown and has a burned odor. You should:

- A. Have your car towed to a repair shop;
- B. Have the fluid and filter changed;
- C. Not worry about it as this is normal.

4) You notice transmission fluid leakage on the garage floor. You should:

- A. Add fluid until the level is about a quart above the full mark to compensate for leakage;
- B. Have a rebuilt transmission installed;
- C. Put in a heavier viscosity of transmission fluid to reduce leakage.

5) If grease is leaking from the CV joint on your front wheel drive car, you should:

- A. Have the protective boot replaced and repacked with grease;
- B. Have the CV joint cleaned off with solvent and taped with plastic or duct tape, then repacked with grease;
- C. Remove excess grease and continue to drive, as this is normal.

Answers

1) The most common cause of this noise is (C) universal joints, although rear axle or transmission malfunctions can be the source as well.

2) Answer (C) is best: Get a second opinion. If yours is one of those transmissions that produce little or no metallic debris, you could have trouble. More often than not, though, a certain amount of this metallic buildup is considered normal. Be sure you seek out a well-trained

transmission specialist for consultation.

3) You definitely should have the fluid and filter replaced, but find out why the fluid has become burned.

4) None of the answers is correct. Consult your transmission specialist. Leakage is common on older vehicles and often can be remedied with a fairly

simple mechanical procedure.

5) The CV (constant velocity) joints, which flex as the front wheels steer and go over bumps, deliver power from engine to wheels. The rubber boots that cover them retain grease and protect these mechanisms from dirt and rocks. A damaged boot, allowing grease to leak out, can cause the joint to fail. After seeking expert advice, be prepared to follow procedure A.

ARNO'S AUTO

SPECIALIZING IN:

- General Repairs
- Licenced Mechanics

— COMPARE OUR SERVICES —



572 Main Street
Glen Williams

ARNO'S AUTO
SALES & SERVICE

877-4571

HALTON TRAILER SALES & RENTALS

1988 RENTAL/DEMOS

ON SALE NOW —
— SUPER LOW PRICES —

- Let us "winterize" your trailer
- We also have "winter" storage
- We sell Truck Caps, Bedliners and Running Boards

CALL US NOW! 877-4266

Trafalgar Road & Hwy. 7
GEORGETOWN

HALTON TRAILER
SALES & RENTALS

Cure for cooling system trouble

It's a cold day and your car's engine overheats. A paradox? Not really, says Car Care Council. Overheating, a problem generally associated with hot weather driving, can happen in any season if the engine's cooling system needs service.

A common reason for overheating, adds Car Care Council, is a clogged radiator. Under normal conditions, the cooling system should be drained and the dirty coolant replaced every year or two as a preventive measure. This is the time

to flush out the system with a good chemical cleaner.

According to Car Care Council, overheating is often caused by low coolant

level. Routine maintenance should include pressure testing to locate leaks and seepage.

Other causes of overheating include incorrect ignition timing, slipping fan belt or other malfunctions in the fan mechanism, faulty thermostat, a collapsed hose or a worn pressure cap.

SUPER LUBE

AND COMPLETE CAR CLEANING

Hey! Got 10 Minutes? Let us change your oil.

OIL SPRAYING \$45.00



877-9394



(MOUNTAINVIEW & ARMSTRONG) 5 Armstrong Ave., Unit 5, Georgetown



JAKE'S AUTO SERVICE

- Tires
- Wheel Balancing
- Transmission Service
- Fuel Injection and Computer Control Service
- Repairs To All Makes Of Cars And Light Trucks
- Air Conditioning Service
- Motor Vehicle Inspection Station

JAKE'S AUTO SERVICE

5 ARMSTRONG AVE.
GEORGETOWN

877-6353

HOURS: MON.-FRI. 7:30 A.M.-6:00 P.M.; SAT. 8:00 A.M.-12:00 N.

— OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK —