

Be Car Care Aware[®]

When The Check Engine Light Is On, Don't Ignore It

(NAPSA)—Don't take this lightly: One of the most vital signals of an improperly functioning vehicle is the check engine light and, when illuminated, it alerts the driver to a variety of existing potential problems. Nevertheless, vehicle check-ups during car care events throughout the country reveal that the check engine light is on in nearly one out of 10 vehicles.

Some common malfunctions that can cause the check engine light to illuminate include a faulty oxygen sensor, mass airflow sensor, or spark plugs and wires. If the light flashes, the condition is more critical and must be checked immediately to prevent severe damage, which may include catalytic converter damage.

"When the check engine light comes on, it means that a vehicle system such as the ignition, fuel injection or emission control is not operating properly, even if the vehicle appears to be running normally," explained Rich White, executive director, Car Care Council, the source for the "Be Car Care Aware" campaign promoting regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair.

"A glowing check engine light doesn't mean you have to immediately pull the car to the side of the road, but it does mean you should get the car checked out as soon as possible. Ignoring the warning light could result in costly repairs. At the very least, the light could alert you to an engine problem that is negatively impacting fuel economy," he added.



Don't be in the dark about your engine's problem when the check engine light goes on: Get it looked at soon.

When scheduling service, make sure the automotive shop that examines your vehicle has professional technicians who are trained and certified in OBDII diagnosis and repair. The technician will connect your vehicle's computer system to a diagnostic scan tool, which will indicate why the light was activated.

At the same time, the technician can analyze idle speed, throttle response, engine temperature, fuel system pressure, manifold vacuum, exhaust emission levels and many other key indicators. Once the problem is fixed, the car's computer is reset to initiate its release process. The technician should then be able to tell you what needs to be done and discuss potential warranty coverage and further testing, if necessary.

Learn More

For a free "Car Care Guide" or for further information, visit www.carcare.org.