

## SERVICE INTERVALS VERSUS OIL CHANGE PERIODS

While both new car engines and oil technology advancements have resulted in dramatically increased service intervals from 4000kms to as much as 30000kms, a Major oil company observes a problem which it says is becoming increasingly apparent.

Modern day car owners are unknowingly imposing upon themselves a false sense of security by assuming that their oil only needs to be changed in conjunction with their on-board service monitor. Unfortunately, says the Major oil company, they are in danger of damaging their engine, therefore minimising its life.

Why? Because owners do not check the section of their vehicle manual to identify personal driving habits, and under what conditions the oil change periods do or do not apply. Dealerships fail to inform the owners that their service monitor is set for *Normal Service Conditions*

As competition heats up in the new car market, many OEM's will, and do advertise the benefits of extended service intervals, particularly when the deal includes free servicing, for obvious reasons. The maintenance cost's to the dealership is minimal within the warranty period, e.g. maybe 2-3 services maximum within that period.

Vehicle manufacturers are designing their engines to take SAE 5W-30 oil and in some instances, even lighter 0W-30. These oils reduce friction, help improve fuel consumption and assist in the reduction of exhaust emissions, all very positive benefits, but ONLY if the right driving conditions apply. The trend to use these lower viscosity oils is becoming more common, but like the heavier viscosity oils, they still suffer from fuel dilution resulting in oil thinning. The fuel enters the oil on cold start-up and depending upon the driving condition of the vehicles, may or may not; get the opportunity to be vapourised.



“Real Time” things like constant short trips and heavy traffic conditions affect the life of the engine oil, and consequently the engine. In fact, today's engines generally last about 200,000 kms, but if well looked after, can and should achieve as much as 500,000 kms without major overhauls.

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### What is covered under the HoldenWise Capped Price Servicing Program?

*The program covers all items specified under the standard service schedules for **normal operating conditions** for each vehicle type specified in the Service Warranty Booklet, including parts, labour, fluids and any applicable workshop charges*

Recently, four of the largest auto manufacturers in the world have extended engine warranty coverage for engine damage caused by oil sludge resulting from extended oil change intervals.

They found that real-world conditions require more frequent oil changes than the 12,000 to 25,000 km interval they were recommending.

They subsequently recommended more frequent oil change intervals based on driving conditions and proof of timely oil changes in order to qualify for the extended warranty

# Driving Habits & Conditions

If you look in the back of a vehicle owner's manual you should see two different types of maintenance schedules ,

*Severe  
Operating  
Conditions*

*AND*

*Normal  
Operating  
Conditions*

80% of us drive in what is categorised as Severe Conditions

A Major oil company says what most drivers do not know is that water vapour, un-burnt petrol and blow-by gases from the combustion process overload the oil. These combine to produce sludge deposits.

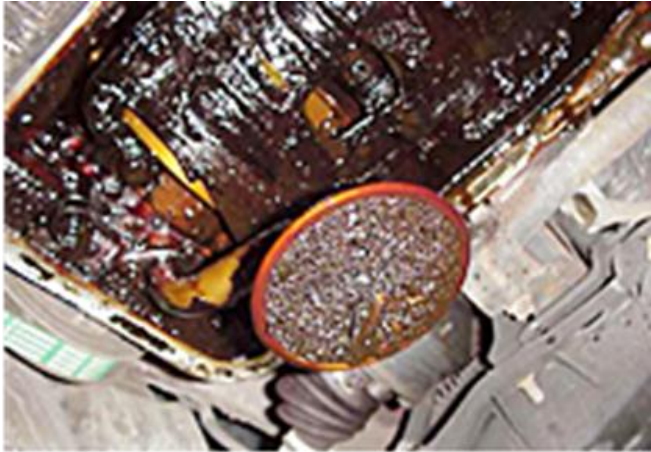


Sludge build up inside a V6 Commodore engine.

It takes about 20 kms from a cold start to fully warm up the engine oil and reduce the rate of fuel contaminations. This does not effectively take place in engines that do not travel further than 20 kms after each cold start. The oil is soon saturated with contaminants and its protective ability is destroyed, no matter what high quality grade it is, synthetic, Group 3, PAO or Esther.

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A Major Oil Company recommends that a vehicle travelling less than 20 kilometres per trip for more than half of its journeys should have an oil change every 5000 to 7000 kms.



If left much longer, this oil pickup would be completely blocked leading to severe damage of the engine.

Most OEM engine manufacturer's service schedules recommend oil changes every 6 months - if a vehicle is driven a number of times in a week and does not reach the maximum distance in that time, the oil should be changed. This affects about 80 % of vehicles that do little more than a token stop-start to work, to the station, to school or to the shopping centre and are at risk of increased engine wear and damage compared with a car which travels long enough to vapourise the potentially damaging contaminants.

Other abnormal conditions that will reduce oil change intervals include dusty roads, heavy loads, and sustained high speeds. Also, simply topping up an engine low on oil with new oil is not the same as giving it an oil change. Contaminants left behind increase in concentration each time the oil level drops, accelerating engine wear.

So, to help protect your customer's investment and yours, spend 5 minutes with your customer. Ask them about their driving habits, check the vehicles manual with them to identify under what conditions the oil change periods do or do not apply. Explain to the customer how their driving habits and the traffic conditions affect the oil, even between regular service periods. Correctly followed, this procedure will maximise the life of an engine, and make for a happy customer, as their car will last a lot longer and that's where they get the ultimate value for money and you retain a long term customer.

