

AAA Spills the Truth on Oil Changes

Making an informed choice about oil changes just got easier, thanks to new research on the quality of engine oil. AAA found that synthetic oil outperformed conventional oil by an average of nearly 50 percent in its independent evaluation, offering vehicles significantly better engine protection for only \$5 more per month when following a factory-recommended oil change schedule.

“Most motorists recognize the importance of oil changes,” said Gene LaDoucer, North Dakota spokesman for AAA – The Auto Club Group. “However, it's equally important to know which engine oil will keep your vehicle operating at its best.”

According to AAA research, very few vehicles require synthetic oil, but all vehicles can benefit by using it. At an oil change service, many drivers are offered a choice between conventional or synthetic oil.

However, in a companion AAA nationwide survey of U.S. drivers, 44 percent are either unsure (27 percent) or do not believe (17 percent) that the more expensive synthetic oil is better for a vehicle's engine. Reasons cited for regularly choosing the cheaper, conventional oil include feeling that synthetic oil is too expensive, offers no benefit, that the upgrade to synthetic oil is an unnecessary up-sell by a repair facility, or they are simply not offered the choice.

Switching from conventional oil to synthetic oil will cost the average driver \$64 more per year, or an extra \$5.33 per month. A survey of AAA's Approved Auto Repair facilities reveals that the average cost of a conventional oil change is \$38, while a synthetic oil change is \$70. For those that change their vehicle's oil themselves, the average cost of 5 quarts of conventional oil is approximately \$28, while synthetic oil is \$45. AAA's survey also shows that vast majority (83 percent) of service professionals select synthetic oil for their personal vehicles.

“Motorists may be apprehensive about switching to more expensive motor oil,” said LaDoucer. “However, the extra cost of using synthetic oil could save them money in the long run by protecting vital engine components over time.”

The hesitation to select synthetic oil may stem from American distrust in repair facilities. Another recent AAA survey found that two-thirds of U.S. drivers do not trust repair facilities, with most citing concern over the recommendation of unnecessary services. Those looking for a trusted repair facility are urged to consider one that meets AAA's high standards, including, technician certifications, ongoing training, financial stability, facility cleanliness, insurance requirements, rigorous inspections and customer satisfaction through the AAA Approved Auto Repair (AAR) program. To locate a shop in your area, visit AAA.com/AutoRepair.

AAA Tips

- Oil quality comes down to the oil's ability to withstand the extreme conditions that exist inside the engine. The greater the resistance to deterioration, the greater protection of vital engine



components.

- Synthetic oils offer additional protection for your vehicle, particularly if it frequently tows heavy loads, operates in extreme temperatures or is driven in stop-and-go traffic.
- Conventional oil that meets a manufacturer's specifications will not harm a vehicle's engine. Always ensure that any oil used in your engine meets the internal performance standards required by the vehicle manufacturer.
- Always follow the oil change interval provided by the vehicle manufacturer. This can be found in the owner's manual, or the on-board oil life system.

AAA's full research report, fact sheet and additional supporting materials can be found at www.NewsRoom.AAA.com