

**TIMES NEWS**  
— MEDIA GROUP —

# **FALL CAR CARE**

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## **2023**



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# The basics of EVs for first-time buyers

Electric vehicles are increasingly visible on roadways around the world. According to BloombergNEF, a strategic research provider covering global commodity markets, in June 2022 there were 20 million plug-in vehicles in use across the globe. That's an increase from only one million in 2016. As more

people are drawn to EVs, drivers can exercise due diligence to learn more about them, particularly if they're considering buying their first such vehicle.

## Different vehicle types

The term "electric vehicle" encompasses a variety of cars and trucks.

The following are some common categories.

· **Hybrid electric vehicle:** These are the most common type of hybrids. They have two power drives, which include a fuel-based engine and an electric motor with a larger battery. A computer determines when electricity or gas should be used. The system utilizes regenera-

tive braking that ensures the electric battery gets a little recharge every time the driver touches the breaks

· **Mild hybrid electric vehicle:** MHEVs use a battery and electric motor to increase the efficiency of an internal combustion engine (ICE). An MHEV does not run solely on

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# EVS

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electric power, but the ICE can be turned off and the electric motor used while braking, coasting and stopping.

· **Battery electric vehicle:** BEVs are powered entirely by electricity and will have no ICE or fuel tank. Users charge the battery using an electrical outlet.

· **Plug-in hybrid electric vehicle:** Like BEVs, PHEVs have an electric motor that is charged by plugging it in. They also have a fuel-based ICE like HEVs. Where they differ is that PHEVs can travel a considerable distance on electric power alone, while HEVs cannot.

## Driving range

The distance EVs can travel before needing to recharge depends on the type of vehicle. Most EVs have a driving range between 50 and 330



miles. Shoppers should determine the “range-per-charge” for the vehicle to assess if it will fit their driving needs and daily commutes. Drivers who frequently take long road trips may have to assess if a hybrid vehicle is more practical; otherwise, careful planning may be necessary to accommodate charging along the route.

Parking and charging situation

Individuals who live

in private homes or rentals with access to outlets may be more inclined to invest in EVs. Charging can be done with a standard 120V outlet, but it will increase charging time considerably. Many people opt to have a 240V charger installed in a garage or driveway, which is known as “Level 2 ESVE equipment.” With this type of setup, a charge can be reached in roughly four to 6 six

hours, says Valley Clean Energy. Public charging stations utilize a 480V input and can charge many EV models in about 20 to 30 minutes. Plug-in hybrid vehicles do not typically have fast charging capabilities, however.

## Reduce maintenance

BEVs require less maintenance than conventional vehicles because there are fewer fluids like oil and transmission fluid to change, and far fewer moving parts. EVs require minimal scheduled maintenance to electrical systems, including the battery and electrical motor. Hybrid vehicles still require the standard maintenance of gas-powered vehicles.

EVs are growing in popularity, so potential buyers can school themselves on these newer vehicles to determine if they’re the right fit for them.



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# Tame traffic-related stress

Aggravation on the nation's roadways has become a frequent topic of conversation over the last decade or so. Incidents that involved traffic-related acts of violence have gained increased attention over that span.

The automotive group AAA estimates that nearly eight out of 10 drivers demonstrate aggressive driving behaviors. While data indicating the number of road rage cases per state is not available, The Trace's study on road rage with a firearm found 522 people were shot in 2021 due to road rage, and that Texas, Florida and California have the most road rage incidents involving guns.

Road rage is the extreme outcome of impatience or frustration behind the wheel. Many



times this frustration stems from traffic-related stress. There are more cars on the road than ever before, which can intensify stressful traffic

conditions. Drivers can take steps to reduce stress while behind the wheel and recognize behaviors that may contribute to road rage.

Don't rush. Leave plenty of time to get to a destination. You are less likely to be impatient and react to traffic stressors if  
See **STRESS** on Page 5

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# STRESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

you are racing the clock.

- Calm down. If there is something that has angered or upset you, take time to calm down before getting behind the wheel.

- Be patient. Recognize that someone driving slowly may be lost or aging with diminished abilities.

- Keep a safe distance. Tailgating can create animosity among drivers. By leaving room, you can avoid aggressive interactions between drivers that can contribute to frustration.

- Don't honk unnecessarily. Honking out of frustration is unproductive and also may exacerbate your levels of stress and anger other drivers.

- Take an alternative route. If you know that certain roadways are plagued by traffic, then figure out a route to avoid



the traffic, even if it may be longer.

- Change your schedule. It's not called "rush hour" for nothing. Certain times of the day feature busier roadways than others. If possible,

alter your schedule so that you commute during off-peak hours.

- Share the driving. Split driving duties with others, particularly when feeling stressed out. Breaking up particularly

long trips among a few drivers can relieve anxiety.

Driving can be stressful, but there are various ways to mitigate feelings that may escalate into anger and road rage.

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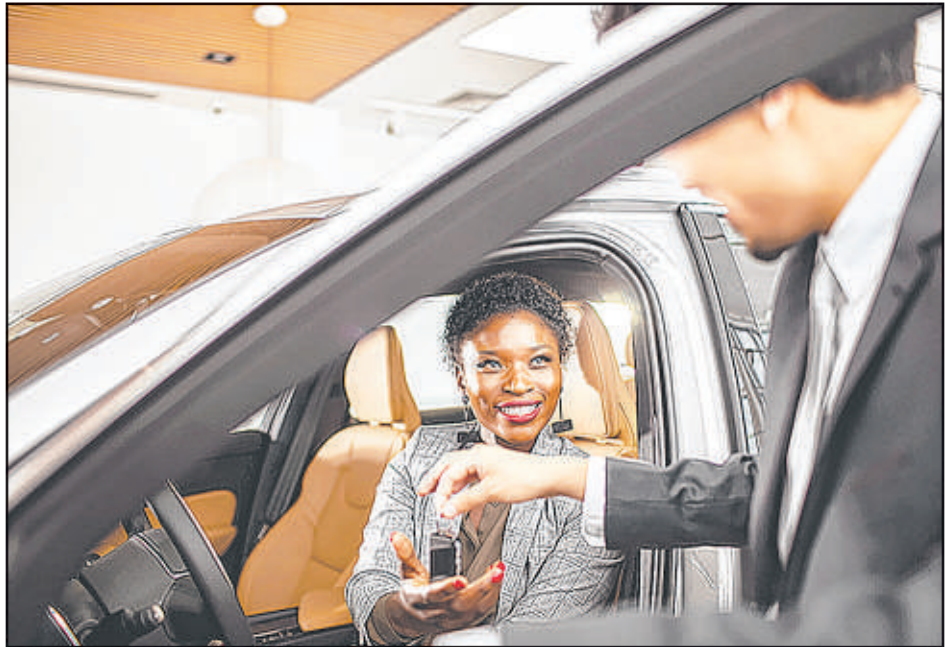
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# Factors to consider before leasing in the current economic climate

No two drivers are the same, and that reality is evident when motorists look for a new vehicle. Some drivers may want a flashy sports car, while others hope to get a great deal on a spacious minivan. Drivers also may be looking for different types of deals when visiting a dealership.

Leasing was once a gateway to a new car for millions of drivers. However, the automotive experts at Edmunds note that leases made up 18 percent of transactions involving new vehicles in the middle of 2022. That figure represented a 27 percent decline from a year earlier. That decline could be a byprod-




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# LEASING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

uct of several variables, including the value of trade-ins. Edmunds notes that the average trade-in value of cars leased in 2020 is 19 percent higher than the predetermined residual value, which means it makes sense for some motorists to purchase their vehicles at the end of a lease rather than turn it in.

Despite the decline in leases, the option to lease can still make sense for some drivers. With that in mind, individuals who are considering leasing can consider these factors to ensure they make the best decision possible.

· **Trade-in value:** As noted above, the value of trade-ins is very high. However, that value could be vulnerable to considerable fluctuations. The spike in average trade-in values was related to supply-and-demand issues as-



sociated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of those issues have lingered, which means the supply of new vehicles is still lagging with some manufacturers. With fewer new vehicles to sell, the value of vehicles coming off a lease could be much higher than the predetermined price lessees would pay to purchase the vehicle outright when their lease expires. Drivers may still prefer leasing to purchasing, but in the current economic climate, it makes sense to determine the market value of a trade-in when their lease is set to

expire.

· **Budget:** Millions of motorists prefer leasing because monthly lease payments on new vehicles tend to be significantly less than it would cost them to purchase the vehicle and finance it through a bank or credit union. And that still holds true, as data from Experian indicates the average monthly payment for a financed vehicle is \$667, which is \$127 more than the average monthly cost of leasing a car or truck. That's a considerable cost benefit of leasing, particularly at a time when high

inflation has forced millions of households to cut back.

· **Maintenance:** Another factor to consider before leasing a vehicle is maintenance. Lessees are responsible for maintaining the vehicle during the lease terms, but new vehicles do not typically require the level of upkeep that older vehicles need. Drivers who are considering purchasing a leased vehicle when the lease expires should factor in the costs to maintain the vehicle in the years ahead, particularly if the manufacturer's warranty is due to expire soon. Substantial maintenance costs could compromise drivers' budgets, and that's unlikely to happen if drivers turn in a leased car and begin a new lease.

Auto leases have declined by a considerable margin in recent years. However, such arrangements may still make sense for some drivers.

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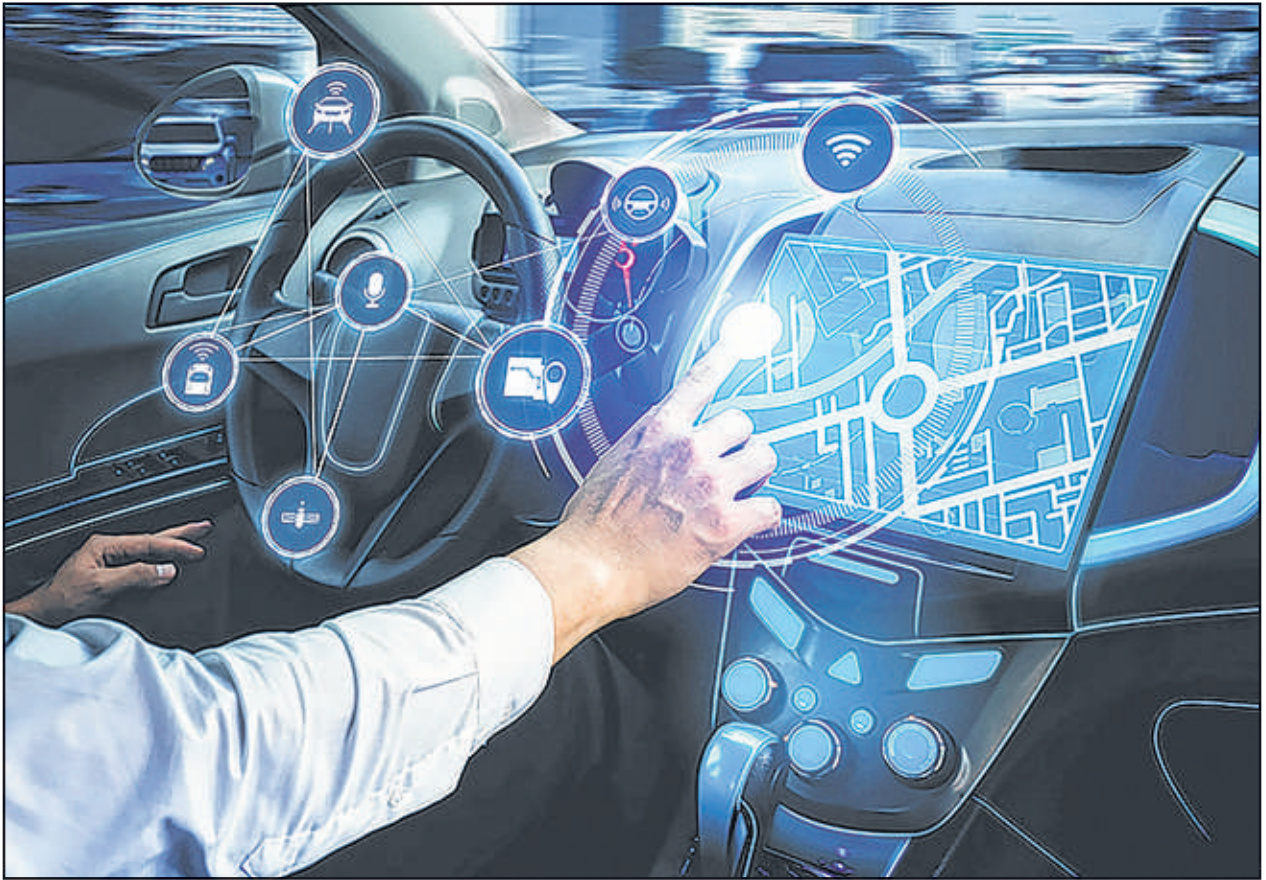
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# Modern car features drivers love

Modern vehicles are technological marvels, which has had a profound effect not only on how much drivers enjoy driving, but also how much they're spending to get behind the wheel.

Data from Cox Automotive indicates that the average transaction price of a new vehicle in March 2023 was just over \$48,000. That can raise the eyebrows of any budget-conscious car enthusiast, but it's also worth noting that modern vehicles have become more economical in other ways. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency indicated that the average fuel efficiency for new cars recently improved to a record 25.4 miles per gallon. More fuel-efficient cars and trucks can lower the costs of vehicle ownership.

Many drivers feel that,

in addition to being more fuel-efficient, modern vehicles are more fun. That's because modern vehicles boast a number of popular creature comforts that have changed the way people drive. Drivers who haven't shopped for a new car in recent years can look for any number of fun features as they begin their search for a new vehicle.

· **Electronic door handles:** Though not as common as some features, electronic door handles provide a futuristic, if not entirely necessary, feel. These door handles automatically extend out when drivers approach their cars and then retract when not in use. This feature is mainly about style, but it also reduces aerodynamic drag, which can help save fuel or, in electric vehicles, improve driving range.

· **Touchscreens:** Screens feature prominently in many parts of the average person's day, so why not when they're in their vehicles as well? Though vehicle touchscreens have been around for years, auto manufacturers are increasingly switching controls for other components, including windshield wipers, to touchscreens, making for a more sleek interior design that is largely button- and knob-free. In addition, various manufacturers are offering larger touchscreens, which can simplify driving in cars that no longer feature physical controls.

· **Keyless entry:** Keyless entry systems, though not new, are another component that can provide a futuristic feel. Keyless entry systems once enabled drivers to keep their key fobs in their pocket and simply

unlock their vehicles by pressing a button on the door handle. Though some manufacturers still offer button keyless entry systems, more modern systems automatically unlock as drivers reach for the handle or pull it open.

· **Head-up display:** Arguably as futuristic a feature as car buyers may encounter, the head-up display feature puts information directly in drivers' line of sight so they are never looking anywhere but toward the road. Information such as vehicle speed and navigation instructions are projected onto the interior of the windshield, not unlike similar systems that have long been utilized in military planes.

Modern vehicles are loaded with futuristic features that can make driving more fun.



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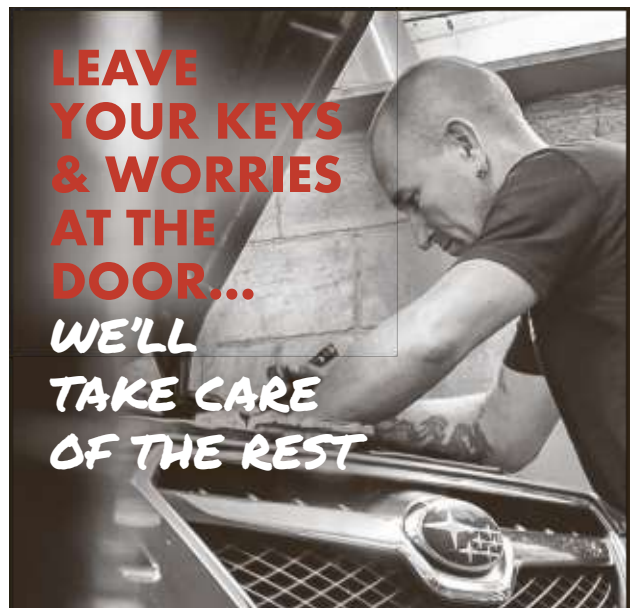
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# How to stay alert behind the wheel

Impaired driving and distracted driving get their share of attention, as both contribute to fatal

yet often preventable accidents. However, another danger lurks when people get behind the wheel

- particularly when they engage in drowsy driving.

The National Safety Council says drowsy driving accounts for roughly 100,000 crashes, 71,000 injuries and 1,550 fatalities in the United States each year. The Council equates the effects of driving while tired to driving with a blood-alcohol content of 0.08 percent. The majority of drowsy driving incidents happen between midnight and 6 a.m. or in the late-afternoon hours, indicates the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in 25 drivers have admitted to falling asleep behind the wheel.

Remaining awake and alert behind the wheel may seem easy. But droopy eyelids and incessant yawns can catch any driver off guard. The following tips can help drivers remain more alert.

Alcohol and certain medications can exacerbate feelings of drowsi-

See **ALERT** on Page 11



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# ALERT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

ness, so neither should be ingested prior to driving. It is important to determine if fatigue arises after taking new medicines before getting behind the wheel.

- Try not to make long distance trips alone. A companion on the drive can share driving duty and provide conversation that helps drivers stay alert.

- Get adequate sleep at night. It is more likely that you may fall asleep behind the wheel if you are sleep deprived.

- Recognize gas station snacks will not be the fix. According to Nancy Foldvary-Shaefer, DO, MS, a sleep medicine specialist, once the body metabolizes these snacks, which tend to be carbohydrate-heavy, drowsiness can increase as the sugar spike in the bloodstream wears off.

- Sip coffee or a caf-

feinated (unsweetened) beverage. The caffeine is a central nervous stimulant. Avoiding sugar will mean you won't crash once it wears off.

- Pull over and take a rest or a brief, 20-minute nap, advises the Cleveland Clinic.

- Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and reduces stress hormones. Doing a small workout before getting on the road, or during pit-stops, can help drivers stay alert.

- Don't begin a trip during a time when you would normally be sleeping. Stop and start while you are alert. Build rest into your budget and stop at a roadside motel.

- Blasting music may not be a fix, and actually could be an extra distraction, causing you to miss the sounds of horns or sirens.

Staying alert in the car involves some strategies that any driver can employ.



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## 5 tips for buying a teen's first vehicle

Adolescence is an exciting time in a young person's life, but one specific development may eclipse all others in the level of excitement it generates: getting a driver's license. The ability to legally drive affords teenagers, long dependent on family or friends to get around, much more freedom.

While most teenagers

hone their driving skills by borrowing the family car, over time teens may need a car of their own. Buying a car is an important financial decision. Whether a teen is purchasing a new or pre-owned vehicle, there are some tips to consider to secure a vehicle that is safe, affordable and reliable.

· Is the time right? Everyone in the household may be anxious to add an extra car to the mix because it may alleviate trying to juggle use of one of the other family cars. However, do not rush into the transaction. In recent years, a lack of inventory related to the pandemic drove up the prices of both new and pre-owned

vehicles. Families may need to wait until inventory increases and prices drop.

· Establish expectations. Parents and teens should have frank conversations about responsibilities regarding buying cars. Talk about who will be paying for the ve-

See **5 TIPS** on Page 13



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# 5 TIPS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

hicle as well as insurance, maintenance and all of the other expenses that go into vehicle ownership.

· Financing may not be an option. Teenagers typically have no credit history, so it's unlikely they will secure automotive loans without a co-signer. Furthermore, teens under the age of 18 may find they are not legally able to sign contracts or have a vehicle title in their name. In such instances, an adult will have to hold the title and ownership until the teen turns 18.

· Prioritize safety. According to Honda, motor vehicles are the leading cause of teenage death, so it is vital to find a reliable and safe car or truck. Vehicle size, crash test

performance and safety features are the most important factors to consider when looking at cars for teens. A car with a high safety rating also may translate to discounted auto insurance, which can be a big help considering teens typically pay more out of pocket for insurance.

· Opt for a used vehicle. While a shiny new car parked in the driveway is appealing, preowned vehicles are more affordable. The insurance premiums on new cars are higher, and teens don't have as much driving experience, so dings and dents may be par for the course. It can be more costly to repair a new vehicle than an older one.

Families must consider a host of factors when looking for a teenager's first car.





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## Maintenance intervals drivers should know

Vehicles are among the most costly expenses individuals have. According to data from Kelley Blue Book, the average price paid for a new vehicle in the United States in September 2022 was \$48,094. Canadian car buyers face an equally expensive reality in their country, where the average MSRP for a new car is more than \$45,000.

Since vehicles are such sizable investments, it behooves motorists to do as much as they can to keep their cars and trucks running smoothly. Vehicle owner's manuals typically recommend maintenance intervals and should be drivers' first resource for information regarding how to take care of their cars and trucks. But the following

are some standard maintenance intervals drivers can keep in mind.

### 3,000 miles

The 3,000-mile marker used to be the benchmark for changing oil, but modern vehicles can now go longer between oil changes. However, it's still a good idea to check other fluid levels every 3,000 miles. Windshield wash-

er fluid, coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid, and power steering fluid should all be checked every 3,000 miles and topped off if levels are low.

It's wise for drivers to perform some additional maintenance checkups every 3,000 miles. Check tire pressure, inspect hoses (which should not be

See **MAINTENANCE**  
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# MAINTENANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

leaking or bulging) and clean the interior of the vehicle every 3,000 miles.

## 5,000 miles

Many vehicle manufacturers now recommend oil changes every 5,000 miles. Tire rotations also can be part of service visits at this interval, and drivers can ask their mechanic to check their fuel filters and batteries every 5,000 miles as well. Many may already do this as part of their comprehensive maintenance packages, but it's still good to confirm if they do and request they do so if it's not part of the plan.

Drivers also can request that cabin air filters are inspected at this point, though they can generally last a year before they need to be replaced.



Around the 5,000-mile mark, wiper blades also may begin to show signs of wear and tear, including streaking on the windshield or scratching noises when in use. Each of those signs indicates the wipers need to be replaced. However, drivers should take note of these signs regardless of when they appear. Some may

not make it 5,000 miles before they begin to wear down. In such instances, they should be replaced immediately regardless of how many miles it's been since they were installed.

## 10,000 miles

Some vehicles may only require oil changes every 10,000 miles. That's not uncommon in vehi-

cles that use synthetic oil, though drivers are urged to consult their owner's manuals.

Brake pads also may need to be replaced around this time, and one telltale sign of that is a squeaking noise whenever the brakes are applied.

Drivers can ask their mechanics to check the alignment of their vehicles around this interval as well. Though many vehicles won't develop alignment issues, it's best to check for such issues every 10,000 miles or whenever a vehicle feels as though it's pulling in one specific direction.

Maintenance intervals are created to serve as a guideline for drivers. Any issues that arise should still be brought to the attention of a mechanic regardless of how many miles have been added to the odometer since the most recent trip to the garage.

# Did you know?

Consumer demand for electric vehicles (EVs) has increased considerably in recent years, and automotive industry forecasts indicate that demand is likely to continue to rise over the next five to 10 years. Despite that popularity, some are still not sure if

EVs are more eco-friendly than traditional cars and trucks, a skepticism that is typically linked to the production of EV batteries. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology report that EVs ultimately are more eco-friendly than gas-pow-


ered alternatives, even if the batteries needed to power them are more carbon-intensive to manufacture than gas-powered cars. In their 2019 Insights Into Future Mobility study, researchers at MIT determined that the average gas-powered car emits more than 350 grams of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per mile driven over their lifetimes. By contrast, hybrid

and plug-in hybrids emitted around 260 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile driven, while fully battery-electric vehicles emitted 200 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile driven. The future also looks even better for EVs, as the MIT report indicates battery EVs could drop to around 125 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile driven by 2050 as more countries work to decarbonize their electric grids.




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# The role of engine air filters

Vehicle engines include complex parts that work in concert to ensure that the car functions properly. When servicing their cars and trucks, vehicle owners may look to many parts of the engine yet overlook a relatively mundane, albeit important, component: the air filter.

All cars come equipped with air filters, which are essential to optimum engine operation. The engine air filter is the first line of defense against outside air that is being brought in to the car engine to be burned along with fuel to produce combustion. The filter will capture particulate matter that would normally enter a vehicle's engine and leave sediment. The automotive resource It Still Runs says dirty air



can reduce engine efficiency and cause damage over time.

Dirty air can compromise the air/fuel mixture that is involved in combustion. Any debris that enters portals in fuel injection systems can compromise that system. In addition, debris can cause fuel to burn less efficient-

ly, resulting in poor fuel economy.

There is no simple answer as to how often an engine air filter should be changed. It largely depends on miles driven and the environment in which the vehicle is used. Those who reside in rural or dusty areas will need to replace air filters more

frequently. Drivers also can install air filters more suited to dusty areas.

An engine filter is not the only filter in a vehicle. There also is a cabin air filter. The cabin air filter does not affect engine performance, but it does help to provide clean air inside of the vehicle. The cabin air filter helps to keep dirt, pollen, bacteria, exhaust gases, and dust from entering the HVAC system. It also can be a barrier against bugs, leaves and other particles from clogging up the system. The cabin filter also helps to keep the air fresh and odor-free. A clogged filter can result in diminished heating and air conditioning performance, so it's important to change this filter as w file:///C:/Users/dhall/Downloads/SC223748(1).TIF ell.



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