

Professional Auto Care July and August 2007 Newsletter

Announcements:

- Be sure to check out our websites www.ProfessionalAutoCare.net and www.HoustonTexasCars.com
- Remember we are your one stop shop, with our state inspection center, alignment center, body shop, and car sales department. Also keep in mind when you refer someone to our shop you'll receive a free oil change voucher in the mail.
- AAA Texas members receive a discount at Professional Auto Care just by showing their membership card when they drop off their vehicles.
- We are officially now a certified BG repair facility and we are continuously updating/replacing our equipment for the top of the line BG machines to better service your vehicles.
- Bring in this newsletter and we'll check your OBD trouble codes absolutely free!

Things You Auto Know:

The "check engine" light is part of your car's so-called onboard diagnostics (OBD) system. Since the 1980s, computers increasingly have controlled and monitored vehicle performance, regulating such variables as engine speed (RPM), fuel mixture, and ignition timing. In some cars, the computer also tells the automatic transmission when to shift.

When it finds a problem in the electronic-control system that it can't correct, the computer turns on a yellow warning indicator that's labeled "check engine," "service engine soon" or "check power train." Or the light may be nothing more than a picture of an engine, known as the International Check Engine Symbol, perhaps with the word "Check." In addition to turning on the light, the computer stores a "trouble code" in its memory that identifies the source of the problem, such as a malfunctioning sensor or a misfiring engine. The code can be read with an electronic scan tool or a diagnostic computer, standard equipment in auto repair shops. There are also a number of relatively inexpensive code readers that are designed for do-it-yourselfers.

Exactly what the OBD system looks for depends on the make, model and year. The original systems varied widely in their capabilities. Some did little more than check whether the various electronic sensors and actuators were hooked up and working.

Manufacturers originally used the OBD system to help technicians pinpoint and troubleshoot malfunctions. But the systems now are required under federal laws governing automotive emissions. Although larger trucks have been exempt from the requirement, that quickly is changing.

Some states are considering an advanced OBD system that would allow them to do away with emissions testing. If the "check engine" light comes on, the system automatically would send a remote signal to state officials, who would contact motorists who don't have the problem corrected within a reasonable amount of time. Privacy advocates are criticizing the idea as being too intrusive. Depending on the system, officials might be able to trace where the vehicle had been. Proponents say the system would free motorists from the time and expense of having to undergo annual or biennial emission testing, and it would help ensure that emission-related problems are detected and fixed more quickly. Oregon expects to launch such a program on a voluntary basis in less than a year.

Remote diagnostics already can be found on GM vehicles equipped with the OnStar communications system. When the "check engine" light goes on, GM car owners can notify an OnStar representative, who can read the trouble code and provide advice.

Source: ConsumerReports.org