

Professional Auto Care Newsletter

January and February 2008

Announcements:

- Happy New Year from everyone here at Professional Auto Care!
- Remember we are your one stop shop, with our state inspection center, alignment center, and car sales department.
- We have new inventory, so visit our website for more information on our vehicles.

Things You Auto Know:

Take the Wheel:

Shocks and struts wear, and their performance degrades, gradually and even imperceptibly. When, then is it the right time to consider replacing them with new units?

After more than three years of durability testing, the Automotive Maintenance and Repair Association (AMRA) says the answer is 50,000 miles. AMRA represents the automotive repair industry and promotes the consumer outreach effort, the Motorist Assurance Program (MAP), that's meant to strengthen communication and trust between the industry and its customers. MAP has expanded its Uniform Inspection & Communication Standards (UICS) to include a standard for shocks and struts. The standard states most ride control units degrade measurably by 50,000 miles and, therefore, replacement for improved vehicle performance may be suggested to the customer after that point. This standard is for OEM hydraulic fluid and/or gas charged shocks and struts only, not for electronically controlled units.

This replacement recommendation was determined through more than three years of testing performed by four major manufactures of shocks and struts. In laboratory testing shocks and struts were tested over 70 million cycles of compression and rebound. (In an average road conditions a shock or strut can complete between 1,200 and 1,750 cycles in one mile of driving.)

"There was a significant degradation as early as 30,000 miles—not in all parameters, but in some," said Tim Tierney, director of operations and programs of AMRA, "By 50,000 miles, there was enough degradation to make some differences in braking and handling characteristics."

Individual manufactures of ride control products have announced efforts to promote replacement of products that are worn, not failed, over the last year. When announcing KYB's initiative last year, Mike Howarth senior vice president of KYB America, said 86% of vehicles arriving at the junkyard still have their original shocks and struts.

"The problem with shock absorbers is, they go bad over a period of time," Tierney said. "Drivers don't notice the minor changes, but over a period of time they adjust their driving or expect something a little different than when they car was new."

Sources: Steve Relyea, Take the Wheel, Parts & Accessories