

Why Is Excessive Idling Considered Severe Duty?

BY TOM AND RAY
MAGLIOZZI

Dear Tom and Ray:
Why in the world is “excessive idling” defined as “severe duty” in all owner’s manuals? I read in one column that idling is harder on the valve train than running at red-line is! What’s the explanation? Lower oil pressure? Hotter oil? I’m crossing my fingers for an answer, as I’ve asked this question many times of many different people, and I still don’t have any idea.
- Frank



CLICK & CLACK

duty.”
RAY: “Severe duty,” in automotive terms, is a collection of conditions listed in most owner’s manuals. If you meet those conditions, it’s recommended that you change your oil more frequently than everyone else.
TOM: In the old

days, excessive idling was listed probably because cars ran so rich. Carburetors dumped buckets of gasoline into the cylinders. Some of it was combusted, and some of it wasn’t. The gasoline that didn’t combust just ran down the walls of the cylinders, and some of it

snuck past the rings into the oil pan.
RAY: That diluted the oil with gasoline. And since diluted oil doesn’t lubricate as well as pure oil, it makes sense to change it more often.
TOM: Nowadays, cars rarely run rich. But the reason they recommend more-frequent oil changes for excessive idlers -- like police cars and taxis -- is because it means your engine is running for more hours than your mileage indicates.
RAY: In other words, if you idle in front of the senior center for five hours a day trying to pick up chicks, like my brother does, you’ll have added zero miles to your odometer, yet your oil will have been

working to lubricate your engine for five hours.
TOM: And if you wait until 7,500 miles go by before changing the oil, your oil may be overdue for a change by then.
RAY: This is one reason why manufacturers like GM and Honda now have oil-change indicators on the dashboard. They measure the amount of time the engine runs and the conditions under which it runs, and then use an

algorithm to figure out how much life is left in your oil.
TOM: It’s a better system than using mileage alone. Not only do you not wait too long between oil changes, but you don’t change the oil too OFTEN, either. So you save money and room in our landfills.
Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk Web site at www.cartalk.com.
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(From Norfolk Ave. & 25th St., go North approx. 1 mile to Dover Dr. & turn West)

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Kenmore #400 washer (less than 1 year old); Maytag dryer; Large recliner davenport; Very large sectional; 2 Matching love seats & 2 overstuffed chairs; Wicker davenport w/2 wicker chairs; Wicker coffee table; Several TVs; 2 Twin beds; Water bed; Feather bed; Chest of drawers; Square coffee table w/glass top; Marble top console; Wicker cabinet w/glass top; Several bookcases; Tiered desk w/scrolled iron sides; Serving table; Chrome armed chair; Desk chair; 2 Bar stools; Captains' chair; 2 Singer sewing machines (one in cabinet); Wood floor cleaner; Castix carpet mate; Computer desk; Cabinet for TV; Several utility shelves & assorted tables; Free standing full length mirror; 2 Dehumidifiers; Humidifier; Cable spinet piano w/bench; Heat Surge elec. fireplace heater (used once); Stereo; Luggage; Many nice Christmas decorations; Many assorted wicker baskets & wall plaques, etc.; Craft accessories (beads, embroidery, etc.); Many figurines; Hundreds of books of all kinds; Many games; Many DVD's & cassettes; Walkie Talkie set; 2 Fertility goddesses; Pet carrier; Dog bed; Baby gate; Usual pots & pans & kitchen items.

EXERCISE EQUIPMENT ETC.

Smoothie bike (near new); Schwinn recumbent exercise bike; Pilate exerciser; Cyclone tracker; Small trampoline; Bar bells; Weights (30 & 40 lbs.); Box of workout tapes & exercise skill (still in box); Infrared massage cot w/neck support; May other related items; Karaoke system; Inversion table w/gravity boots (still in box); Ergonomic chair.

GARAGE

Yardwork leaf blower (new); Elec. weed eater; 10 gal. Shop Vac; 8 ft. Wood stepladder; 3-Step step stool; Handy cart; Tool box; Garden & shop tools; Double halogen lamp on stand; Many miscellaneous.

MANY MORE ITEMS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION

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