

Dick from Michigan writes by e-mail: *“A friend has a 2007 GMC Envoy, and low miles. She took it to a dealer for a "free oil change" and about two days later, the OIL light came on. Oil level is OK and they are driving it! Oil light stays on. Any ideas or suggestion would be appreciated?”*

Halderman: Before I could answer, I got this e-mail:

“Oil light was on "amber", not red. Ah ha!!! I said.....

“I asked what caused why they had the oil changed. She said: "We always change at 3,000 miles!" I asked if the oil light was on then. Her Answer was "no". She asked; “why did it come on after the oil change?”. I told her the computer didn't know the oil was changed. I re-set Oil Life Monitor and life returned to normal. I explained the system to her and told her to NOT change at 3,000 miles. Too bad the GM dealer didn't reset it”

It used to be common practice to have the oil changed every 3,000 miles or every three months whichever occurred first. Today this has changed. Most vehicles are equipped with a maintenance reminder light that comes on when maintenance is needed.

The oil life monitor system used on General Motors Co. vehicles (GMC, Buick, Pontiac, Saturn, Chevrolet and Cadillac) use a computer program that keeps track of the following:

- Number of engine starts
- Miles driven
- Temperature of the outside air and engine(coolant) temperature
- Time the engine is running

Based in the program, the oil life monitor subtracts from 100% a percentage based on the conditions. For example, a cold start when the engine is at zero degrees might take 1% off the oil life for each start because cold starts are hard on engines and engine oil. Then a long trip at highway speed may only take off 0.1% because this type of operation is gentle on engine oil. The oil should be changed when it reaches close to the end of the oil life as displayed on the dash display or when the oil change light comes on.

Other vehicle manufactures also use an oil life monitor, but most use mileage alone for oil changes such as every 5,000 or 7,500 miles, depending on the make and model of vehicle.

Some vehicles have several levels of service required, such as level A (oil change only for example) or a B service (oil change and air filter replacements), or a C service (for more extensive service, such as brake fluid replacement and other services).

Regardless of the vehicle, be sure to ask that the maintenance reminder light is reset. For a complete list of the procedures to how to reset the lights for all makes and models visit my web site

(<http://jameshalderman.com>) and click on “charts and specifications.” This chart is free and can be downloaded and printed for easy reference.

