

Wheels: We received an e-mail from Elmer that states: "I have a 1994 Buick LeSabre which now has 130,000 miles on the odometer. It has two problems, which were first noticed at about 50,000 miles. The symptoms of these problems are similar although at different operating conditions.

One problem is when the engine is idling in gear there is a slight engine vibration which disappears when the transmission is put in neutral. This problem has existed the longest and seems to be about the same as when first noticed.

The other problem is most noticeable between 45 and 40 mph. When the transmission is in high gear and a slight load is applied either to slowly accelerate or on a slight incline, the engine begins to vibrate before downshifting. This continues until the accelerator is further depressed causing the transmission to downshift. I have recently noticed a slight engine vibration at higher speeds, in high gear, when a slight load is applied. I have had the transmission serviced and one engine mount replaced but this did not solve the problem. Any suggestions to solve this problem will be greatly appreciated."

Halderman: Thanks for writing. I'll try to give you some idea as to what can be wrong without seeing or observing the problems.

On the first problem, a slight engine vibration could be an engine mount or an engine fault such as a spark plug, plug wire, or even an ignition coil (your engine has three coils). The engine mounts may have to be all loosened and the engine moved around a little and then have the mounts tightened. Has the car been in an accident? Has the transmission been replaced before this problem occurred? If so, then these mounts may have been moved out of position.

The torque converter or drive plate (flex plate) could also cause the type of vibration you describe.

The second problem of a vibration at 40-45 mph could be due to a fault in the EGR system (partially plugged passage to one or more cylinders) or a torque converter clutch problem (TCC). With the miles you have on the car, I would suspect that the TCC is the most likely fault. The clutch material itself is a thin layer of paper and if this paper wears off, a TCC shudder can occur. In severe cases, the shudder can vibrate the mirrors and often feels as if you are driving over small ruts in the road. I hope this helps.

