

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Don says, “We purchased a new import SUV and have had the auto serviced at the dealer on a regular 3000 mile basis. We have an extended 100,000 mile warranty from the manufacturer. Should we continue to take the car back to the dealer for service and should we follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the 15,000, 30,000, 45,000, and 60,000 mile checks? Some of these checkups get to be expensive – \$389 for the 30,000 mile check-up. Thank you for your answer.”

**Halderman:** Most import brands recommend routine service, which usually includes an oil change and tire rotation, plus numerous inspections and other minor service items. If you are planning on trading the vehicle within three years for a new model, then having the vehicle serviced at the dealer may increase the resale value because it could then be sold more easily as a certified used vehicle. Having all of the records, makes getting a used vehicle certified easier, and at less cost to the dealer, therefore, a higher price may be offered at trade-in time.

However, any automotive repair facilities can handle most of the routine service and often at a lower cost than from the dealer. Most vehicles today include some maintenance reminder lights that warn the driver that service is due. Some of these lights use a computer program to determine when the oil should be changed based on the number of starts, duration of the trip, outside air temperature, and other variables.

To be sure that the vehicle is being serviced according to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended intervals and doing the services suggested, you could take the owner's manual to the shop and point out the services that need to be done. Some of the items that may need to be changed or serviced include:

1. Oil and oil filter change
2. Air filter replacement
3. Cabin filter replacement
4. Transmission fluid change
5. Differential fluid change
6. Antifreeze changed
7. Brake fluid changed

I realize that these services may cost a lot of money, but it is wise to maintain the investment in your vehicle. In a way, the vehicle dealers are performing a service by publishing the cost for each service so that the cost can be budgeted and planned for in advance. Considering the other costs involved in vehicle ownership, the cost of routine maintenance is relatively low. Just consider the amount spent every month for fuel.

