

Wheels: An e-mail from Aaron, says, “I have a 1997 Ford Taurus with 92,000 miles on it. I recently took my car in for an oil change. At the garage, I was asked if I ever changed my power steering fluid. I have not ever changed my power steering fluid because it is not listed in my maintenance schedule. Since then, I have noticed this service advertised at other locations. Is this a new recommendation due to new technology? If this is a needed service, I will definitely begin performing this service on my cars. Please give me your expert advice.”

Halderman: Most vehicle manufacturers do not include power steering fluid changes on their list of recommended services except for inspection of the fluid level. However, all fluids absorb moisture and contain fine particles of metal and rubber from the steering system. In the 1980s, some vehicles had problems with excessive wear in the power steering rack and pinion assembly. This wear contaminated the fluid. When this occurred, flushing the power steering system and refilling the system did help the power assist. Since the early 1990s, in my opinion, the power steering system is one of the most reliable systems in the vehicle. Under most driving conditions, I don't recommend the need for routine power steering fluid flushing unless there is a power steering-related problem. If there is a power steering-related problem, see a professional service technician before having any routine service performed on the system.

