

Wheels: Chuck asks in an e-mail, “I am driving a 1998 Chrysler Town and Country minivan and a 2000 Dodge Intrepid. The van has 120,000 miles on it and the Dodge has 81,000 on it.

Is it true that I should not let the gasoline tank levels get extremely low (close to empty) because of the damage that could occur to the fuel pumps?”

Halderman: Yes, that is true because electric fuel pumps are cooled and lubricated using the gas in the tank. When the fuel level is low, the temperature of the fuel is higher, which can reduce the life of the fuel pump. Newer vehicles, since about 2000, that use returnless-type fuel systems do not get as hot as those that use a return-type system. Consider 1/4 tank to be empty and add fuel then for best overall engine operation and fuel pump life.

