

Wheels: Ervin writes, “I have a 1996 Buick LeSabre Custom with 22,000 miles. I bought the car new, have treated it carefully, and am a conservative driver. I was surprised, therefore, when a Buick dealer told me that I needed a new oxygen center and new spark plug wires. It seems that these parts should last more than 22,000 miles or seven years of aging. How come?”

Halderman: Parts do fail with age and sometimes independent of mileage. These parts are considered to be maintenance items and should be replaced if defective to avoid the possibility that further damage could be done to the catalytic converter. Because the vehicle is 8 years old, you are driving about 2750 miles per year or only about 50 miles per week. Without getting the vehicle fully warm and occasional highway driving, carbon deposits can affect the oxygen sensor. I suggest you have the part replaced and then try to drive the vehicle at highway speeds for at least 10 miles every week if possible to keep the engine performing normally.

