

Wheels: *A.F. writes by e-mail: "I have A 2002 Crown Victoria and the check gas cap light on the dash came on. I stopped and checked the cap and it looked fine to me. I even added more gas. Still the check gas cap light remained on. This morning after sitting all night in the garage, I again took off the cap and retightened it but when I started the car up it still said check gas cap. What is your thought and will this reset itself? Do I need a new gas cap? Why would this light come on when the gas cap is off as it does not come on when I fill up the car and have the gas cap off?"*

Is there anything else besides a bad gas cap that could trigger this light? If I buy a new gas cap, do you think it will make it go off and how long might that take? The car has about 150,000 miles on it."

Halderman: The check gas cap message comes on if the system detects a leak in the fuel system. If the cap looks normal and seems to be okay, then try driving the vehicle for a week or so and see if the message goes away. It will not go away until the system does another self-test. The self-test has to be performed under very strict conditions such as after 8 hours soak time with the temperature within a certain range and the fuel level between 15% and 85%. Therefore, if the fuel level is too high or too low, the self-test will not occur and the light will remain on. You can ask your technician to turn the warning light off using a scan tool but be prepared to pay for this service. If the light comes back, have a technician check the cap for leakage and if the cap is not leaking, this means that there is likely a leak in the evaporative emission control system. Testing this system usually requires that a special machine be used so while a replacement gas cap will often take care of this concern, be prepared for further diagnostic charges and repair expense if the leak is not caused by the gas cap.

