



The Commuter's Oil Change...

003000 miles or hours?

Whoever suggested this interval for a vehicle was not a commuter!

1 hour of engine idle time is equivalent to 25 miles/40 km according to Ford. Idle time is defined as the engine idling over 10 minutes per hour of normal driving, frequent low speed operation or sustained heavy traffic less than 25 MPH.

Most experts agree modern engines do not handle idling very well, and that idle time causes twice as much wear on a vehicle's internal parts as regular driving does. **The bottom line is how many hours is a vehicle's engine running but the wheels are not moving?** Don't you hate sitting in gridlock traffic and seeing a 60 speed limit maximum sign! Unfortunately, we spend more time in traffic than ever according to data from TOMTOM GPS company. Los Angeles holds the record for the most gridlock traffic in North America with 104 hours a year of idle time. Vancouver has 87 hours a year of gridlock, the worst in Canada. Shockingly, in Vancouver, it is only based on a 30 minute commute per day. For many commuters, like sales reps, tradesmen, delivery drivers, among others, is far worse. They spend most of their work day in a vehicle, much of that time not even moving. It's no wonder road rage is such a huge problem. It causes extra stress on the driver, not just the vehicle.

In my 30 year career, I have driven in every major city in Canada and in all 50 US States. The time I spent on over 2200 flights was much easier on my psyche and nerves. Speaking of planes, those engines are actually tracked in engines hours, not mileage. Boats and large truck engines are also tracked in hours.

All Ford heavy duty trucks built since 2005 have metres which track engine hours in the dash instrument cluster from the factory. This info is also available for many newer vehicles.

The impact of this reality on oil change intervals, for a large percentage of your customers, is huge. Just based on the simple fact alone that: **1 hour of idle time is equal to 25 miles/40 kms**, that is equivalent to an average of **one extra oil change per year** for many of your customers

We need to educate **and advise our customers to not wait for 3000 miles/5000 km for an oil change** if they spend a lot of time commuting. I think it all starts by asking our customers and noting the answers. You could have a simple form on your counter asking one single question, "How much time do you spend in traffic a week?". You could also run the quiz for a month and educate your customers of the overall results. A simple statement on their invoice, a simple blurb on your website, or an attractive sign in your shop indicating the results, would accomplish this. You could also track it individually for each customer using data from their vehicle and inform them of the results. You could calculate the average for your shop and post that as well. Definitely an interesting and eye opening education for your customers.

An educated customer is our best customer. Having customers understand the impact of idle hours on their vehicles creates a desire for them to come back for more frequent oil services. The added visit per year means their vehicle will be monitored more frequently. The inspections you perform while changing the oil can help reveal potential serious issues, catch tire wear early, keep their vehicle safer, save money on fuel and numerous other benefits.

The impact of this knowledge for your business can be enormous. Even if you were only able to get 20% of our customers to come in for one extra oil change per year the potential sales and profit increase for your shop is huge! With effective marketing, sales and pre-booking you should be able to easily secure an average of 2 extra appointments per day. It can be even more beneficial if you schedule those appointments for your typically slower days of the week, which in many shops is Wednesday and Thursday. Based on a shop with a \$100.00 per hour labor rate, 1.5 hours per invoice, a labor mix of 50% that could increase the sale in an average shop by \$160,000.00 + per year. It's all about implementation!

More frequent oil services means:

The customer wins. The vehicle wins. Your shop wins!

Kelly's next weekly article "Mastering Scheduling" will be out May 3.

Subscribe to Kelly' weekly article by sending simple email request to Kelly@kellythecoach.com

