

The Importance of Servicing Cabin Air Filters

Why is a Cabin Air Filter Important?

As many as one-in-six Americans currently suffer from asthma or some type of allergy caused by airborne contaminants. These conditions can be magnified when traveling in the cabin of a vehicle that does not have proper air circulation or appropriate filtration.

Whether it is simply incoming fresh air, or air entering the cabin during the use of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system (HVAC), the environment inside the cabin of a vehicle is subjected to exhaust gases, pollen, bacteria, dirt, dust and soot. These substances become concentrated inside the vehicle because they exit the interior of the car slower than they enter. Such contaminants can trigger asthma and allergy symptoms, headaches, and eye and nose irritation. Unfiltered cabin air can be as much as six times as polluted as the air outside.

Filtering the incoming air drastically decreases the overall number and size of contaminants entering the passenger compartment. Modern cabin air filters can capture particles as small as 3 to 5 microns, which eliminates the majority of pollen, mold spores, most dust and noxious fumes. The filter also protects your vehicle's ventilation system by preventing buildup of those substances on ductwork, heating and cooling components.

How Do I know if My Vehicle is Equipped with a Cabin Air Filter?

Since the early 1990's, automobile manufacturers have recognized the benefits provided by the addition of cabin air filters, and the trend has continued to grow. Today, more than 80 percent of new domestic and import vehicles sold in the U.S. come equipped with cabin air filtration systems, or have a designated location where one can be installed as an optional accessory.

Cabin air filters can also be found as standard equipment in many types of heavy-duty applications. Some examples are agricultural, construction and mining equipment, as well as on-highway trucks and buses.

The location of the cabin air filter can vary widely from model to model. In some cars and trucks, the cabin air filter is located under the hood, while in others it is under the dashboard or behind the glove compartment. The owner's instruction manual will usually explain where to find it, if the vehicle is equipped with one, or you can ask a dealer or other automotive professional to point it out for you. Many of the aftermarket filter manufacturers' also provide some type of model specific installation instructions or 'how to' videos on their website.

How Often Should Cabin Air Filters Be Replaced?

To keep air quality at its best, filters should be replaced according to the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations, but the general guideline for replacing cabin air filters is 12,000 to 15,000 miles/20,000 to 25,000 kilometers, or at least once a year - more frequently if you drive in dusty conditions or near industrial environments. Regularly changing cabin air filters can also maximize the life of your cars HVAC system by



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reducing debris and corrosion on the evaporator core. In addition to an unpleasant odor, filters not changed after 20,000 miles or 32,000 kilometers may result in decreased heating and air conditioning performance caused by restricted airflow through the cabin air filter.

Dirty filters are also less effective in capturing particles and gases because their active components, such as charcoal or charged fibers, are less exposed to the incoming air. Telltale signs that a cabin air filter replacement may be necessary are weak air flow coming from the ventilation and defroster outlets, and fogging of the windshield when the engine is warm, the defroster is on, and the air flow selector is set to outside (fresh) air mode.

For additional information, contact:

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