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CarMD SHARES TIPS TO HELP AVOID COMMON SUMMER CAR AILMENTS

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (June 21, 2010) – Nothing can slow down a road trip like car trouble, and seeing that “check engine” light flash on the dashboard is a sure fire way to put the brakes on a summer getaway. In preparation for the summer travel season, CarMD.com Corp., today announced the top five most common reasons for breakdowns as compiled by Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) technicians at CarMD (www.CarMD.com) along with tips to help avoid roadside incidents this summer. A recipient of a prestigious 2010 Edison Best Product Award, the **CarMD® Vehicle Health System** provides drivers with comprehensive consumer tools and information to make educated decisions about their vehicles’ health and maintenance.

“Our goal is to empower drivers with all available information to catch problems early, and begin to predict and prevent problems before they ruin a road trip,” said Art Jacobsen, CarMD’s director of business development. “We have tapped into our network of ASE master technicians and proprietary database, to release this information to encourage drivers to conduct preventative maintenance, and cost-effectively resolve issues early.”

All 1996 and newer vehicles in the U.S. – foreign and domestic – are equipped with a computer that triggers a “check engine” light when a system isn’t running correctly. The computer sets a diagnostic trouble code (DTC) when a problem occurs. CarMD provides drivers with the tools and information to catch hidden problems and quickly translate their vehicle’s “Check Engine” health and DTCs into a language they can understand. The CarMD handheld device plugs into your car’s computer through an easy-to-access port (usually found right under the steering column). It uses an LCD display and color-coded lights to alert you to a problem or give you peace of mind with a green light. When a problem is present, CarMD customers can plug their handheld device into their computer to run a report that explains what’s wrong, what it will take to fix it and how much repairs should fairly cost. This information is derived from a proprietary database that CarMD’s network of ASE technicians has built from the ground up over more than a decade. Unlike any other knowledgebase available, CarMD provides the most probable fix down to parts and labor costs by zip code, as well as safety recalls and technical service bulletins.

CarMD’s Top Five Summer Car Ailments

The following is a list of problems that occur frequently in summer months, some of the DTC’s associated with them, and ways to help avoid them altogether, or fix them when they occur:

1. **Evaporative Leak** – Evaporative emissions are caused by fuel volatility, or its tendency to change from liquid to gas. A rise in outside temperature can cause an increase in pressure inside your gas tank, which must be vented to prevent the gas tank from deforming. They are vented from your gas tank into a charcoal canister on your vehicle, which absorbs the fuel vapor and stores it until the engine is started and the vapors can be purged. This is the reason you can usually smell gas in a full parking lot on a hot day. The evaporative system is much more than just your gas cap; it’s a network of hoses, valves and canisters that manage evaporative emission from your vehicle. This system is highly regulated by the federal government. Vehicles today need to detect a leak that is 0.02 inches in diameter. If such a leak is detected, the “check engine” light must be turned on. Related trouble codes range from P0440-P0459. Some common examples are P0442 Evaporative Emissions System Leak Detected (Small Leak), P0455 Evaporative Emissions System Leak Detected (Large Leak) and P0457 Evaporative Emissions System Leak Detected (Fuel Cap loose/off). Although a loose gas cap is a common culprit, don’t assume it’s the cap. If your vehicle is older, you may have a cracked hose, which is in essence a fuel leak.

(MORE)

CarMD's Top 5 Summer Car Ailments – 2-2-2

- 2. Engine Hesitation or Surge** – This problem may occur due to a variety of issues such as a dirty air filter, which can require the engine to work much harder and can cause drivability problems. In high heat and humidity, vehicles are prone to problems with exhaust gas recirculation (EGR). EGR is used to re-circulate a portion of the exhaust back through the engine to help reduce emissions. In the summer, this flow can start to build up in your car's intake manifold causing blockages and drivability problems. Related trouble codes are P0400 - P0409, and may result in lack of power, hesitation or even surging upon acceleration. If not fixed, it can lead to expensive repairs. If you're getting your car ready for a trip, be sure the air filter is clean. If you're only half way into your cross-country trip, it's a good idea to get to the local repair shop when this problem occurs. Think of your vehicle's air intake system as analogous to your lungs. Anything that's blocking or restricting flow causes you, or your engine, to have to work harder to get the same level of oxygen. In most cases, when a customer calls from the road with these fault codes CarMD's technicians err on the side of caution and recommend that they go to a nearby repair shop.
- 3. Overheating** – Some of the most common reasons cars and trucks overheat are a faulty cooling system or low fluid level. During the hotter months, your vehicle's cooling system has to work harder to prevent engine overheating. Diagnostic trouble codes may include P0115-P0119 and P0480-P0485, which signify problems related to the coolant system, fan and engine coolant temperature. Be proactive and don't wait until your dashboard warning light comes on, or you find yourself pulled to the side of the road with a steaming hood. If you do wind up in this situation it's a good idea to turn off your air conditioning and turn on your heater. Although it's hot, it can help remove heat from the engine and use the additional fans to cool things down until you can get to safety. Be careful not to overheat in the process. Also, always remember to check your car's fluids, such as engine coolant, brake fluid, automatic transmission fluid, washer fluid and engine oil regularly. Reference your service manual for the proper levels.
- 4. Flat Tire / Blow Out** – One of the most common culprits of road trip delays are flat tires, which can be caused by wear and tear, or even over inflation in summer months caused by increased air pressure from the heat. While some newer model vehicles have tire pressure monitoring systems (TPMS) to let you know when your tires need air, most cars' computers will not detect this problem. A simple mechanical tire gauge will tell you if you need to add or let out air in your tires. If you don't have one, most service stations have one right on the air pump. Always refer to your owner's manual or the label inside the driver's door for proper tire inflation levels.
- 5. No Start** – Car batteries rarely signal failure ahead of time and often occur at the most inopportune time such as during a summer getaway. Hot summer months are the absolute worst conditions for your battery and are the reason why people who live in desert climates have to change their battery more frequently than the rest of us. Fault codes P0514-P0517 are related to battery temperature. Heed these early warnings and make sure your vehicle has all of the plastic pieces that surround the battery on the vehicle. These pieces are engineered to keep your battery cool and divert fresh air across the battery to extend its life. Also fault codes P0620-P0623 have to do with the alternator or generator that keep the battery charged and power your car while you're driving. The battery is used mainly for starting the vehicle. If it is taking a long time to start, check the battery. You can do this with a simple battery tester that plugs right into your vehicle's 12-volt receptacle. A failed battery will cause the alternator/generator to work harder to charge it, and can lead to alternator failure if not cared for quickly. Take care of battery problems while it's just the battery. Another good preventative measure is to replace your battery every three years or as recommended by your repair shop or manual. If you live in a hot climate, consider purchasing a battery warranty to save you some significant money down the road.

Most CarMD customers elect to have repairs made by a qualified ASE technician. For those who want to tackle some light maintenance themselves, such as replacing an air filter or fuel filter, [click here for easy how-to videos from CarMD](#). CarMD recommends that its customers use the diagnostic information for automotive repair guidance and that drivers always consult with a qualified automotive technician before making repairs.

About CarMD.com Corp.

The mission of Fountain Valley, Calif.-based CarMD.com Corp., is to empower consumers and the vehicle market by providing the tools and information needed to make better-educated decisions about their vehicles' health and maintenance. Distributed by CarMD.com Corp., CarMD is priced at \$98.99 and is available in the U.S. direct to consumers at www.CarMD.com. The product is supported Monday – Saturday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Pacific Time) by live Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified technicians based in the U.S.A.

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*The diagnostic trouble codes referenced are based on tens of thousands of fixes from CarMD's diagnostic database. They are meant as a guide. You should never replace a part based solely on a DTC.

(Media Note: CarMD experts are available to comment on these tips, as well as to provide industry expertise on a variety of automotive repair and maintenance issues. To request an interview or more information, please contact Kristin Brocch by phone: 949.400.4899 or email: KristinB@CarMD.com)