

*Bill Wilson and his crew at Crown Point Auto Repair know about cars and think you should, too. They need regular maintenance. Little problems can quickly turn into big problems when they are ignored, and a vehicle's life expectancy is greatly increased when it's treated with a little care.*

A vehicle ingests about 10,000 gallons of air to burn a single gallon of fuel. And if you add to it all the contaminants that the air along roads and highways contains – soot, dust, debris, leaves, straw, tiny bits of rubber – imagine the amount of dirt that can enter the engine compartment each time you take your vehicle out.

Dirt found alongside roads is of the worst kind. It's abrasive and full of grit and when a large quantity of unfiltered roadside air enters the engine compartment, besides contaminating the oil, it has the greater potential to damage critical engine components like valves, piston rings and cylinder walls.

That's the bigger risk, both mechanically and, ultimately, financially. A torn or clogged engine air filter, can compromise a car's performance and long life, and possibly call for the cost of replacing the engine.

When considering an engine air filter replacement for your vehicle, the two most important criteria to consider are 'capacity' and 'efficiency.' Capacity is the amount of dirt the filter can hold before it begins to restrict the flow of air and efficiency describes how well it captures the dirt before it can enter the engine's combustion chambers.

Changing your car's engine air filter is quick, easy, and inexpensive. Older cars often had a round air filter resting in a round housing under a lid held in place by a wing nut. Today's more advanced fuel-injected engines normally use a flat, rectangular panel-type air filter that resides in black plastic duct work in the engine compartment. Usually, all you need to do is release several clamps, separate the housing halves, lift out the old filter, and install the new one.

Most people should change their vehicle's engine air filter once a year or every 12,000 miles unless you're driving in unusually dirty or dusty conditions. Because of the long intervals between changes it's important to install the best filter possible for reliable and efficient filtering.

*If you're interested in learning more about proper vehicle maintenance, contact Bill Wilson, master mechanic and owner of Crown Point Auto Repair, or one his crew at 219-663-1847.*