

TECH TIPS

REAL-LIFE SOLUTIONS YOU WON'T FIND IN A FACTORY MANUAL



Toyota Aims to Fix Prius Problems

FOLLOWING CONSUMER COMPLAINTS that Toyota's hybrid Prius automobile can stall or completely shut down without warning while traveling at highway speeds, the automaker is working to fix a software glitch in the Prius' computer system it believes is causing the problem. The complaints include 2004 and some 2005 model-year cars.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has received at least 13 reports of engine shutdowns since 2004. Many of these vehicles reportedly had to be towed to a repair shop before being restarted.

The vehicle's gasoline engine is designed to shut down or run at a low rate when driving at slow rate or idling but provide most of the car's power while traveling at highway speeds.

There are no injuries or fatalities associated with the problem. A NHTSA spokesman said the Agency is monitoring the complaints, but no formal investigation has been initiated.

Toyota identified a "programming error" in the computer systems of 23,900 Prius cars last year and sent owners a service notice advising them to bring the cars into dealers for an hour-long software upgrade.



IT'S YOUR TURN

Motor Age will publish its annual Tech Tips issue in November

2005, but you're running out of time. Deadline for submissions is July 31, 2005.

We want to fill the pages of *Motor Age* with YOUR experience... your best fix ... brightest ideas ...

or hard-won victory with a particularly unusual service problem. Readers will vote for their favorite tip in each category. The most popular entries in each category will walk away with some neat stuff: tools, books and other great prizes. Now's your chance. don't let it slip by.

E-MAIL YOUR ENTRY TO: motorage@advanstar.com

ENTRIES MAY BE MAILED ON DISK (FLOPPY, ZIP OR CD) TO:

Motor Age Top 100 Tech Tips
100 W. Monroe St., Ste. 1100
Chicago, IL 60603

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE:

Visit the *Motor Age Online* Web site @ www.motorage.com.

LETTERS COMPLACENCY ON THE ROAD

Ron Panzer of Ron's Olde Car Fix-It Shoppe in Marengo, IL, sent us this picture of a brake rotor removed from a car that was driven to his shop. The owner mentioned a sudden drop in pedal height, which Ron says probably happened when the piston fell out of the caliper.

Ron says, "It's impossible to make things idiot-proof when we keep coming up with better idiots ... complacency is running amok on our roads today and the "dumbing-down" of America is going full speed."

We say, if your state doesn't require periodic safety inspection, it wouldn't hurt to look at the brakes before test-driving a customer's car.

Thanks, Ron, for sharing this tidbit.



1. The competition is open to automotive service professionals, such as technicians, shop owners, service writers, apprentices, etc. *Motor Age* employees, as well as our advertisers and their employees, are not eligible.
2. Entry deadline is **July 31, 2005**.
3. Your entry must include your name, title, place of employment, address and phone number in case we need to contact you. *Motor Age* reserves the right to exclude any entry that does not provide this information.
4. Your entry should be no longer than 250 words in length. Keep it as short as possible.
5. Entries can be submitted under the following categories: Brakes, Engine/Mechanical, Transmission, Suspension/Steering, HVAC, Electrical, Diagnostics, Tools, Fuel and Emissions, Shop Management, or General. Tips can be model-specific, but you must include the category at the beginning of each tip submitted.
6. Entries can include a photo, but it must be submitted as a high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi @ 4 inches wide) .jpg, .eps. or .tif digital file. We cannot accept photos embedded in Word documents; they must be sent as separate files.
7. There is no limit to the number of tips you may enter; however, *Motor Age* reserves the right to limit the number of entries per person in a single category.
8. All submissions are subject to publication and may be edited for grammar and space.