

GM Oil Life Monitor System Frequently Asked Questions

How does the system work?

The GM Oil Life Monitor System is not a mileage counter. It is actually a computer based software algorithm that determines when to change oil based on engine operating conditions. There is no actual oil condition sensor. Rather, the computer continuously monitors engine-operating conditions to determine when to change oil. Over the years, millions of test miles have been accumulated to calibrate the system for a variety of vehicles. The system was first introduced in 1988 and is now on more than 10 million GM vehicles.

How do I operate the system?

The GM Oil Life Monitor System is very easy to use. First, refer to the vehicle owner's manual for a description of the specific 'change oil' message and the instructions for resetting the system. When the vehicle has been driven the appropriate miles, the 'change oil' message will be illuminated on the instrument panel or driver information center when the vehicle is first started. An oil change should be done within two fuel tank fill-ups from when the message was first displayed. Immediately after the oil has been changed, the system must be reset. After resetting, the 'change oil' display will no longer be displayed after engine start up.

I change my oil every 3000 miles, so of what use is this system?

You can continue to change your oil every 3000 miles if you so choose, but remember to reset the system after changing the oil or you will get a false "change oil" message. However the GM Oil Life Monitor System will allow you the ability to extend the mileage between changes without harming your engine. This will save you time and money as well as helping to protect the environment by minimizing the amount of used oil.

Do I have to use special oil?

The GM Oil Life Monitor System is calibrated for use with standard "Starburst" mineral-based automotive engine oil. Synthetic oils are not required except for the Corvette. Make sure to read the owner's manual and select the viscosity and oil grade that is correct for your engine. Any oil selected for use should carry the ILSAC "Starburst".

How many miles can I expect to go between oil changes when using this system?

The beauty of the GM Oil Life Monitor System is that it will automatically adjust the oil change interval based engine characteristics, driving habits and the climate in which the vehicle is operated. For instance, mild highway driving in a warm climate will maximize the interval between oil changes. Depending on the vehicle, this could be in excess of 7000 miles and as high as 12,000 miles. On the other hand, short trip driving in cold a climate may limit the oil change to 3000 miles or less. In general, most people that drive a combination of city and highway schedules find that the GM Oil Life Monitor System will indicate an oil change every 7500 to 8500 miles.

What happens if I change oil and forget to reset the system?

Since the GM Oil Life Monitor System does not actually sense oil condition, it is important that the engine computer knows when an oil change takes place. By enabling the reset (read owner's manual for instructions), it lets the computer know an oil change has taken place. In the event that an oil change is done without resetting the system, the 'change oil' indicator will remain illuminated until the system is reset. The more miles that are driven without the system being reset, the more inaccurate the GM Oil Life Monitor System will be. If more than 500 miles have been driven after an oil change without resetting the GM Oil Life Monitor System, the oil change interval should be defaulted back to 3000 miles. After the oil has been changed and the system reset, normal use of the system can be resumed.

The oil change service station recommends that I change oil every 3000 miles.

Why should I not believe them?

The 3000 mile oil change is very conservative approach to maintaining your vehicle that dates back to 1968. Many advancements in engine and oil technology have been made since then. These advancements, in conjunction with using the GM Oil Life Monitor System, allow engine oil drain intervals to be increased without risking harm your the engine.

I change my own oil, should I reset the system myself?

You can reset per the vehicle owner's manual, or ask your selling dealer.

Will I damage the car if I don't get the oil changed soon after the light comes on?

As stated in the owner's manual, change oil as soon as possible. It is recommended that oil be changed within 600 miles of the change oil light / message.

Do I have to check my oil level now that my vehicle is equipped with the GM Oil Life Monitor System?

Yes, the system does not sense oil level. As stated in the owner's manual, it is recommended that you check your oil every time you stop for gasoline.

Will I void my warranty if I don't go by the GM Oil Life Monitor System?

Complying with the owner's manual recommendations will maintain the warranty.

I had my oil changed recently and now my GM Oil Life Monitor System light came on.

If the system was not reset (refer to owner's manual) at the time of oil change, the system can be reset as long as it's been less than 500 miles since the last oil change. If this mileage has been exceeded, change the oil at 3000 miles and reset system.

I prefer to have my oil changed still around 3,500 miles, what should I do?

It is ok to change oil prior to being notified by the vehicle. Be sure the system is reset even if the GM Oil Life Monitor System light has not illuminated.

My oil seems dirty, I have 6,000 miles and no light, do I have a problem?

Discoloration will take place under normal conditions depending on driving conditions. Refer to the Owner's Manual for further information

Can any dealer other than my selling dealer perform Simplified Maintenance services?

While we like to recommend the selling dealer, any GM Goodwrench dealership can perform the Maintenance I and Maintenance II service and reset the GM Oil Life System.

I use synthetic oil, should I expect to get more miles before the trigger point with GMOLS?

The GM Oil Life System is calculated based on the factory fill requirement. While some benefits may exist, the oil drain interval is not extended due to the use of synthetic oil.

During Summer I drive my vehicle in a very hot climate, do I need to change oil more often?

The beauty of the GM Oil Life System is that it calculates for severe climate use and determines the oil change interval just as it does for trailer towing as well as stop and go operation. There is no need to adjust the oil change based on climate, as well as vehicle use.

I continue to get 3,000 mile follow-up mailers from my dealer, what should I do?

Inform your servicing dealer that you prefer to go by the Maintenance I and Maintenance II driven by the GM Oil Life Monitor System so that they may adjust the way you receive follow-up mailings.

I have another GM vehicle a 2002 model with the GM Oil Life Monitor System, can I use the Simplified Maintenance Schedule with it also?

While it is equipped with the GM Oil Life Monitor System, Maintenance I and Maintenance II was not yet introduced. The proper recommendation would always be to follow the owner's manual.