

Worried Over Warranties?

AMSOIL is a recognized leader in the lubrication industry. The company's introduction of the world's first API-rated synthetic motor oil brought many lasting and irreversible changes for the oil industry, automotive manufacturers and consumers alike. Extended drain intervals, synthetic lubricants for all applications and, above all else, unparalleled quality have defined the brand. Still, after more than 35 years, millions of miles, refutable scientific proof and countless customers who are not only satisfied, but oftentimes amazed, some people are still concerned that using AMSOIL lubricants will void their vehicle's warranty. A new vehicle is a big investment, so it is understandable if owners are concerned about anything that might affect the vehicle's warranty. Furthermore, language in owner's manuals can be confusing as to what is allowed and what will void the warranty, especially when it comes to lubrication and maintenance. People are often told to use the vehicle manufacturer's brand of lubricants and to change oil every 3,000 miles, or else. The fact is, vehicle manufacturers cannot require motorists to use a specific brand of lubricant, unless they provide it at no cost. They also cannot void warranties due to the owner's practice of extending drain intervals.

Not Just Cars and Trucks

Cars and trucks aren't the only expensive machines affected by these concerns. New snowmobiles, boats and motorcycles come with warranties very similar to automotive warranties. In fact, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in these industries also promote the use of their own lubricants and create the same concerns among powersports enthusiasts. For example, a letter to the editor in the Summer 2007 issue of Harley-Davidson Enthusiast magazine asks, "Would I void the warranty if this lubricant is not specified in the H-D owner's manual?"

The editor responds by saying, "SYN3 is the only synthetic motor oil that does not impact your 24-month, unlimited-mile factory warranty."

Of course, this is untrue and would be a direct violation of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act. The next issue of Enthusiast contains a letter from another reader who corrects the editor's response from the summer issue. The letter-writer requests a correction if it was a misprint, or the paperwork necessary to obtain his free oil if it was not. The editor notes that the magazine received dozens of similar letters (including one from AMSOIL INC. Executive Vice President Dean Alexander), and Enthusiast addressed the issue in an interview with Larry Gutjahr, P&A Lubricants Category Manager at Harley-Davidson. Gutjahr quickly denounces the claim that the use of other synthetic oils will void Harley-Davidson's warranty and explains that Harley recommends its own brand of oil because they don't test other oils.

"No, that's not true. We cannot and would not void a warranty for use of another brand of oil."

-Larry Gutjahr, P&A Lubricants Category Manager, Harley-Davidson

API Certification Concerns

Another common misconception is that motor oils must be API certified in order to meet warranty requirements. The fact is, lubricants are not required to be certified by the API, only meet or exceed API specifications. An API license indicates that a specific motor oil formulation has passed the minimum performance standards as defined by a series of laboratory bench tests that include physical, chemical and engine tests. API licensing was originally developed for mineral-based oils. Petroleum motor oil companies can take advantage of the convenience and flexibility associated with base stock interchange, which allows them to buy petroleum base stocks from any number of suppliers without being required to re-test and re-certify their products. This ensures adequate supply and competitive pricing. Most synthetic base stocks, on the other hand, are supplier specific and base stock interchange is not allowed. If, for instance, AMSOIL wanted to blend an API-approved motor oil using the same type of base stock from a different supplier, the oil would have to be re-tested and re-certified. This process is both time-consuming and cost-prohibitive. This forces a one-supplier relationship that eliminates leverage during price negotiations. Furthermore, single-source supply of critical raw materials creates significant risk of a production shutdown in the event of supply disruptions, as was the case following Hurricane Katrina.