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Date: May 15
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Survey reveals DPF troubles shock motorists

GSF Car Parts say a recent garage survey has highlighted strong driver demand for diesel particulate filter (DPF) treatments, with the vast majority of the motoring public oblivious to potential DPF problems.

The telephone survey of over 100 independent garages completed in April found 84% undertaking work on DPF problems up to 3 times per week.

DPFs first appeared 30 years ago, and were standardised after 'Euro 5' emissions standards in 2009. Typically a cordierite, silicon carbide or ceramic matrix core captures 80 to 95% of the harmful particles contained in diesel exhaust, but over time, DPFs can then become blocked by these soot deposits.

DPF 'regeneration' burns away accumulated soot, but requires high engine temperatures over an extended driving time to work best. Growing numbers of diesel cars, and rising DPF fitment rates, have seen aftermarket problems spike sharply in recent years.

Awareness proved shockingly low amongst motorists – 86% of garages simply said their customers were 'not aware' of DPFs.

Since February 2014, the MOT test has required a visual inspection to check the DPF is present, yet removal of the DPF, or its filter core, is still prevalent. An undercover BBC report in Staffordshire last year after the MOT change still found 5 out of 10 garages offered to remove or alter the DPF.

A huge range of legal treatments are now available too. If the problem is caught early, most garages said it was possible to regenerate the car simply by driving it. Otherwise, pour in treatments were the next resort for over 90%.

Last resort options were then to send away for specialist cleaning, or more often complete DPF replacement. New DPFs can cost from several hundred to over £1,000, with combined catalyst units particularly expensive.

GSF Car Parts currently offer Wynn's 500 ml Diesel Particulate Filter Regenerator and Simply DPF Cleaner 250 ml pour in treatments. Both are mixed in with a tank of fuel to reduce the typical temperature of DPF regeneration from over 600°C to around 450°C

"This research clearly showed DPF blockage is a big issue," said John Wright, General Manager of Garage Essentials at GSF. "In more severe cases, DPF replacements costs often come as a big shock to motorists.

"There's no doubt this DPF cost issue is driving business into the unscrupulous traders still out there still illegally removing DPF filter cores."

GSF Car Parts say they are now reviewing their trade DPF treatment programme.

Adam Plumtree, Director at A & A Motors, Yorkshire said: "We probably deal with a couple of DPF faults each week.

"The public have been misdirected into choosing diesel engines by the government but modern diesels are very expensive to maintain.

"There are a lot of companies out there doing DPF removals, even though a car would fail an MOT if it has been removed."

Jagdish Parmer, Director at 4.2 Motors, London said: "Customers don't know about DPFs, you tell them about taking it for a run on the motorway and they say the dealers didn't tell them when they bought it."

Stuart Addison, Manager at A & A Motors, Hartlepool said: "When people are sold a diesel car, the dealerships aren't explaining enough about what they need to do.

"A lot of people just potter around the town and go to the shops. Diesels need to carry out their regeneration cycles and they can generally only do that on a long run."

ENDS 570 words

Further Information

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About GSF Car Parts

GSF Car Parts has a successful trading history spanning over 30 years.

Today's business, brought together in April 2000 by the German & Swedish Management Team, has its origins in a number of long standing expert car parts specialists such as Vee Wee, Autocavan, Andyspares, and URO Automotive.

Since the formation of GSF Car Parts in 2000, the company has developed a parts and distribution portfolio to create the UK's largest independent parts supplier. Today, GSF Car Parts employs over 1,000 people serving the UK and Ireland through over 70 stores and over 400 GSF delivery vans, managed from centrally-located headquarters in Birmingham

GSF's fast-growing retail business supplies components and consumables direct to customers' doors and through 'click and collect' from a sophisticated online catalogue and e-commerce site. In many cases, customers can save up to 50% off main dealer retail prices.