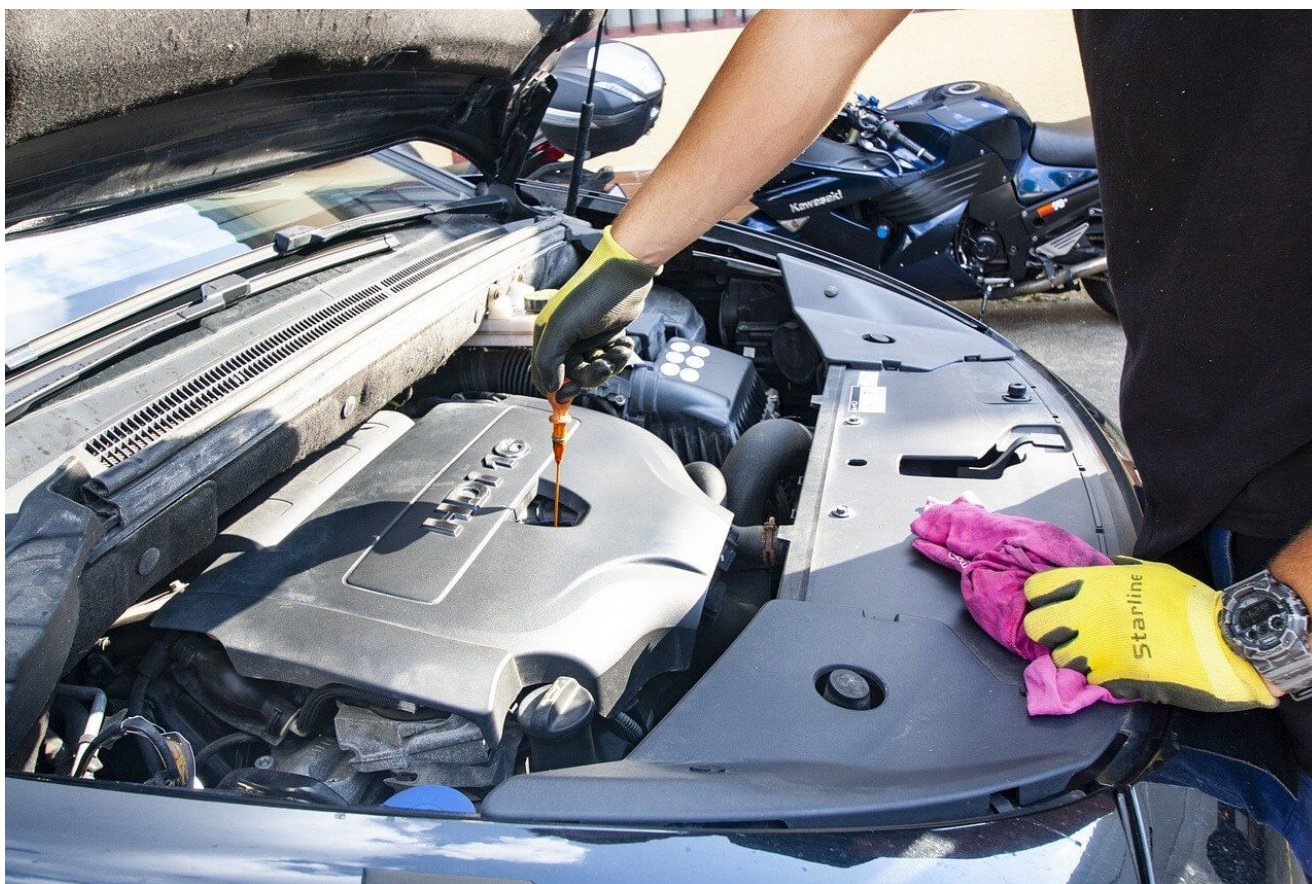


Fluid Flushes: Are they really worth it? What you Need to Know

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February 24, 2020



These days, it can seem very difficult to tell which services are being recommended because they are important and which ones are recommended only because they make money for the shop.

Fluid flushes are a common service that customers ask about. And this makes sense.

There are no warning lights or reminders to flush your brake fluids. You won't get a little sticker in your windshield reminding you to replace your transmission fluid.

However, proper fluid maintenance is an important part of making sure your car stands the test of time. In this article, we will examine what fluid flushes actually do for your vehicle and when you may need to perform them.

What is a Fluid Flush?

Technically, an oil change is a fluid flush. Your vehicle employs several different fluids to help its components do their jobs.

Over time, these essential fluids pick up dirt and other contaminants. This can reduce their effectiveness or actually make them harmful to your vehicle.

A fluid flush involves draining all of a certain type of fluid out of your vehicle and replacing it with new, pristine fluid.

While different vehicles have different recommended service intervals, every manufacturer recommends changing your fluids at regular intervals. These intervals are dependent upon which fluid it is.

Transmission Flush

Your car's transmission requires a specific type of oil in order to make it function properly. Over time, this oil—commonly referred to as transmission fluid—picks up dirt and grime.

This dirt can coagulate and cause clogs within your transmission system. These clogs can cause severe damage to your transmission—one of your vehicle's most expensive components.

Many manufacturers don't recommend changing your transmission fluid until the 75,000-100,000 mile mark. However, for owners who want to maximize the longevity of their transmission many technicians recommend performing this service every 30,000-50,000 miles.

For those car owners who drive in rough conditions, such as making deliveries or anything that involves a lot of short distance driving and stopping and starting, it is useful to change your transmission fluid every 15,000 miles.

It's not just automatic transmissions which need fluid maintenance. Manual transmissions use a more standard oil, but still require maintenance at regular intervals.

A new automatic transmission starts at around \$3,500 for most cars. Performing regular fluid maintenance on your transmission is the best way to extend the life of that transmission, making them well worth the cost.

Engine Coolant (Anti-Freeze) Flush

Since 2011, vehicles have begun using 5-year or 10-year coolant. This has reduced the frequency with which these fluids need to be replaced.

However, coolant does the important job of protecting your engine—the heart and soul of your vehicle. For that reason, it seems like a good idea to at least check your fluids more regularly than that.

Considering that you'll be hitting other service intervals every 30,000-35,000 miles, ask your mechanic to go ahead and check your coolant while they're under the hood anyway. It's better to know sooner rather than later if there are problems.

For vehicles older than 2011, make sure to perform this service every 50,000-75,000 miles.

Power Steering Flush

Many manufacturers state that their power steering fluid lasts for the lifetime of the vehicle. However, that is certainly not always the case.

Your power steering fluid takes a lot of stress. It is exposed to the heat of the engine whenever the vehicle is running. It also is susceptible to extreme cold in winter temperatures. This back-and-forth can lead to early breakdown of the fluid.

Bad power steering fluid can cause severe damage pumps, hoses, and steering gear seals. Eventually, this will wear down your power steering system to the point of failure. This can be a very dangerous situation.

For this reason, mechanics recommend changing a power steering fluid flush every 50,000-75,000 miles. Given its importance, it's worth checking at other major service intervals, too.

Brake Fluid Flush

Other than an oil change, a brake fluid flush is probably the most common fluid service performed. And for good reason.

Not only is your brake fluid extremely important, it is also one of the most susceptible to gathering dirt and grime. Inefficient brakes are ineffective brakes. Ineffective brakes are terribly, terribly unsafe.

In addition to dirt and other contaminants, it is also very easy to get water into your brake fluid. This is because condensation builds up little by little over time. Water in your brake lines can severely impact your ability to stop when you need to.

Your brake fluid should be clear or at least translucent. If your brake fluid has a noticeable color, especially brown, that means it is contaminated. If you smell burning or if your brake fluid is black, go to your mechanic immediately. This means that you are experiencing brake failure.

In order to avoid such a dangerous situation, change your brake fluid every two to three years, or every 24,000-36,000 miles depending on the age of your vehicle.

Fuel Injection Flush

The cleanliness of your car's fuel system is incredibly important to its performance. Clogged fuel systems are the number one reason for poor gas mileage.

Your fuel injection system is a big part of what makes your car go. That's why it makes sense to have your fuel system cleaned every 30,000-35,000 miles. The savings in fuel economy alone almost certainly means this service will pay for itself.

However, cleaning a fuel system is slightly more complicated than some of the other mentioned flushes. It takes some skills and equipment that many shops do not have. For this reason, it's important to have the service performed by an ASE Certified technician.

Rear Differential Flush

This is one of those services that you probably haven't heard or thought about before. It is one of the most commonly overlooked services, yet it is incredibly important if you drive a rear-wheel drive vehicle.

In a RWD system, the rear-differential has its own lubrication. This keeps all the little parts in the differential moving smoothly and prevents slipping, locking, or an overall breakdown of the component.

Replacing or repairing a rear differential is a very expensive job. For this reason, it is good to at least check these fluids every 30,000 miles and to change them every 75,000 miles.

Fluid Flushes Conclusion

Your vehicle is likely one of the most expensive things you own. While you can "get away with" not performing some of these fluid flushes, you are risking reducing the working life of your vehicle significantly.

Some of these services, such as a brake fluid flush, are absolutely essential to the safety and performance of your vehicle. Other services, like a rear differential fluid flush, can often provide helpful information about the health of your vehicle.

That said, regular intervals are an approximation. Everyone deals with different driving conditions. Depending on where you live, severe weather can completely change the math on what those intervals should be.

The only true way to tell whether or not it's time for a fluid flush is through thorough testing. StrutDaddy's offers exhaustive, in-depth diagnostic testing as a service. With these tests, you will know for sure whether or not your car will benefit from a fluid change.

If you do need something like a transmission fluid flush, you can be sure that your ASE-Certified technician at StrutDaddy's will perform this service with the most advanced methods and technology available.

Take care of your car's fluids so they can take care of your car. Schedule your next test or service using our [handy online service request form](#) or by calling us at (336) 599-4911.



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