



Protecting Engine Air Systems: Tips for Proper Air Filter Maintenance

Use a restriction gauge to determine the air filter's life. Many air filters are thrown away prematurely simply because they look dirty. A filter may look ready to be changed, but still have a considerable amount of service left. Filters may have little dust, but be completely plugged with a fine contaminant such as exhaust soot. A restriction gauge is the only way to determine how much service life is left in the filter.

Use the correct air filter. Air filters are designed to flow a certain amount of air in a certain direction, either outside or inside. There are also differences in the types of media used in air filters, depending on the application. Make sure you have the correct part for the correct application. Crosses made by dimension alone are often incorrect.

Do not use a damaged air filter. A filter that has been dented or damaged may not seal correctly and could allow dirt to enter the engine. A few ounces of dust will destroy an engine. If a filter is damaged, it should be exchanged for one in the proper condition.

Keep the air filter housing closed. Removing the filter for inspection only increases the opportunity for dust to enter the air intake. When an air filter is disturbed, the contaminants on the dirty side may fall into the clean side of the housing. Let the restriction gauge tell you when it is time to change the filter.

Do not attempt to clean the air filter. Striking a filter against an object or blowing it out with a pressurized air hose in an effort to dislodge some of its contaminants will only damage the filter and deteriorate its ability to protect the engine. Washing the filter is another practice that should be avoided. Washing weakens the structural integrity of the filter and could cause engine damage. Most manufacturers will not warrant an air filter or engine damage if an air filter has been cleaned.

Make sure all air filter components are in proper working condition. During service intervals, inspect all components of the air filtration system to ensure proper maintenance:

- If the housing uses a cover gasket, make sure the old gasket is replaced with a new one.
- Make sure all lids or covers are mated correctly to the housing and the proper amount of torque is used.
- If the housing has buckle-type latches, make sure they are working properly and are not stretched.
- Inspect the housing for cracks or defects that might allow dust to by-pass.
- Check all intake ducting and clamps for proper alignment and torque.
- Inspect the restriction gauge to ensure it is in place and working properly.
- Make sure the housing is free of contaminant by vacuuming the dirt from the housing and then wiping the housing until clean with a damp cloth.



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