

ROAD TO SAFETY

Drivers Can Travel Worry-Free With Remote Diagnostics Service



(NAPSA)—Every day, millions of Americans hit the road, commuting, running errands, vacationing with their families, sometimes traveling hundreds of miles without thinking about the potential vehicle problems that could occur.

Fortunately, motorists whose vehicles are equipped with an in-vehicle communications system have access to a feature that can detect certain problems in a vehicle while traveling.

For example, Laura Tieman of Branson, Mo., realized the unique benefits of this capability while driving to New Orleans on a business trip. Tieman was about 300 miles from home when the “service engine soon” light appeared on her dashboard. Concerned about her vehicle’s drivability and her own welfare if the car broke down, Tieman pushed the blue OnStar button in her vehicle and explained the situation to an advisor.

The advisor performed a GM Goodwrench Remote Diagnostics probe, which found that her vehicle needed servicing immediately. The advisor scheduled her an appointment with a GM Goodwrench dealership in nearby Memphis. Tieman also worked with the dealer to arrange an alternate vehicle so she could continue her trip while her car was being serviced.

“Without OnStar, I don’t know where I would have been—stuck on the road I guess,” said Tieman, who picked up the repaired vehicle on the return trip home a week later.

GM Goodwrench Remote Diagnostics is currently available on

some 1997 model year and newer GM vehicles equipped with OnStar. Here’s how it works:

When the subscriber presses the blue button and informs the advisor of the vehicle’s performance, the advisor sends a diagnostic systems request signal to the vehicle’s computer system via an imbedded wireless connection.

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The probe accesses the vehicle’s trouble codes, which allow the advisor to explain to the subscriber the nature and severity of a possible problem and what action is needed. Advisor recommendations can range from advising the customer to take the vehicle to the nearest dealer for service, to suggesting the customer pull over to wait for roadside assistance, to scheduling a service appointment.

“Remote diagnostics is very straightforward as far as how it can benefit the customer,” said Phil Magney, principal analyst with the Telematics Research Group. “With telematics you can contact your service provider and they can help you diagnose what’s wrong with the car by analyzing those fault codes wirelessly.”

Industry analysts say remote diagnostics will eventually lead to cost declines in warranty and recall costs and gather performance data that will assist the overall vehicle development process.