



CAR CARE CORNER

Your Senses Can Tell You A Lot About Your Car

(NAPSA)—Want to find out if you are having car trouble? Trust your senses.

“There are many ways that your senses can be used, both when the car is stationary and moving, to tip you off to the condition of various parts,” says mechanical engineer Mark Ferner of the Pennzoil-Quaker State Research Technology Center in Houston. Following these guidelines can help save money by locating problems early.

Sights

Make sure that all lights work—brake, turn signals, head and rear lights, along with the inside dashboard, dome and glove box lights. Also check your flashlight, which should always be in your emergency kit.

Put some paper towels or newspaper pages on the garage floor or driveway underneath the engine for at least an hour to check for possible fluid leaks. If fluid collects, don't assume what the fluid is—there are many different brands of fluids of varying colors, including some that change over time.

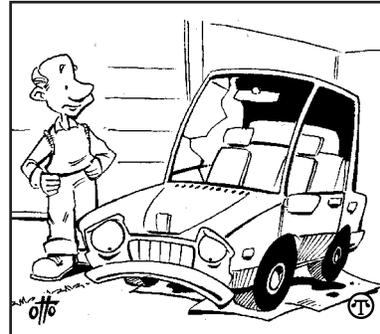
Jiffy Lube will check fluid levels for free including oil, transmission, differential, radiator, power steering and window washer, as part of overall preventive maintenance. A low level may indicate a leak.

Look at the top and sides of the battery along with the engine. If you see a build up of grime or dirt, clean it. A dirty battery can drain electricity and an engine runs hotter if it's dirty, using energy that could propel the car.

With a flashlight, check belts on the inside for cracks. If cracks are deep or frequent, the belt may be in danger of breaking. It should be replaced.

Sounds

Turn off the radio while driving and listen for suspicious sounds. The transition from gear to gear in the transmission should be nearly silent without grinding or rubbing noises. A humming sound from below, possibly a change in pitch when accelerating, can mean



the differential or wheel bearings are low on lubricant or a more serious problem may exist. Have the car inspected.

A growling or groaning sound when turning is a strong indication that you're low or out of power steering fluid.

A high-pitched, rhythmic squeal, either when starting the engine, accelerating or taking a low-speed turn, probably means loose fan belts. Using a belt lubricant may take care of it. If the noise continues, have a professional check it.

Smells

If you smell “burning rubber,” it can mean you're riding the brakes. This poor technique also damages the brakes including the brake linings. The proper way is to pump the brakes lightly and then let up before finally coming to a complete stop. A “rotten egg” smell often means there is unburned gas in the catalytic converter, which is a part of the emissions control located in the exhaust system. Ignoring this problem means an expensive repair later.

A sweet, steamy odor after the vehicle is fully warmed up probably indicates a leak in the coolant system. If you want to check where a leak in the radiator may be coming from, don't touch its surface or open the radiator while the engine is hot or you may receive severe burns. Let it sit until cool.

It's wise to use your senses to be more aware of your vehicle. Yet, there's no substitute for having certified technicians, like those at Jiffy Lube, check that what you observe might indicate the need to have more extensive inspection done on your car.