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CarMD Publishes 2022 Vehicle Health Index of Check Engine Light Repair Trends

Finds Catalytic Converter Replacements on Model Year 2005-2008 Vehicles Top List of Most Needed Repairs

IRVINE, Calif. (Apr. 27, 2022) – CarMD.com Corporation, a leading provider of automotive diagnostic data and business solutions, today released its 2022 CarMD® Vehicle Health Index, an annual overview of check engine light-related car repair costs and trends. With new car inventory still sparse and gas prices skyrocketing to record highs, CarMD’s report can inform vehicle owners about commonly diagnosed car problems, related costs and ways to extend vehicle life.

“The Check Engine Light is designed to come on when a vehicle’s computer sees a problem that impacts emissions issues, which means if you are driving with a check engine light on – even if it seems like your vehicle is running great – you are not getting as good of fuel economy as you could be getting, you are hurting the environment and potentially doing more harm to your car or truck,” said David Rich, CarMD technical director. “ We encourage car owners and the automotive aftermarket to reference the CarMD Vehicle Health Index to monitor check engine light repair trends, which can help inform repair diagnostics, parts purchasing and lead to extended vehicle life.”

The following is a breakdown of the five most common check engine light-related repairs in 2021 and the average cost to make that repair, including parts and labor. Each of these issues will keep a vehicle from passing its state emissions test and will negatively impact fuel economy if ignored:

1. **Replace catalytic converter(s) with new OE catalytic converter(s)**, \$1,355
2. **Replace oxygen sensor(s)**, \$243
3. **Replace ignition coil(s) and spark plug(s)**, \$387
4. **Replace mass air flow sensor**, \$319
5. **Tighten or replace fuel cap**, (free to tighten and \$25 on average to replace)

Other findings detailed in the 2021 CarMD Vehicle Health Index:

- **Car Repair Costs Up Amid Aging Vehicle Population.** In 2021 car repair costs were up 3.6% overall, totaling just under \$393 on average as the average vehicle age jumps to 12.1 years old and cars start to outlive their parts.
 - Repair costs were up in all four regions of the U.S. in calendar year 2021, with drivers in the South and Northeast seeing the biggest spike – both up 3.7%.
 - Labor costs (\$143.35) were down half a percent, which CarMD partially attributes to more DIYers doing their own repairs and competition among auto repair shops.
 - As projected by CarMD last year, parts costs (\$249.22) were up 6%. Factors that played a role in this parts cost increase include supply chain issues coupled with an uptick in more expensive car parts failing as consumers hold onto their cars and trucks longer than ever before due to lack of new car inventory.
- **Vehicle Age Impacts Check Engine Light Problems.** CarMD found that model year 2007 vehicles were most likely to need a check engine light-related repair in the past year, with brand new (still under warranty) 2021 cars and trucks

least likely to have an issue. Model year 2005-2008 cars and trucks were most likely to need a costly catalytic converter.

- **Why is the Catalytic Converter Repair So Expensive?** Catalytic converters contain precious metals – palladium, rhodium, and platinum – which make them a valuable commodity for thieves. The good news is that catalytic converters do not typically fail unless a more affordable repair like replacing an oxygen sensor is ignored for too long, or the vehicle is up there in age, essentially outlasting its parts.
- **Don't Panic! The Check Engine Light Might Be Caused by a Loose Gas Cap.** CarMD reminds drivers not to panic or ignore a check engine warning light because it might be a simple and affordable fix. One of the five most diagnosed check engine light repairs is a loose, damaged or missing gas cap, which is free to tighten and roughly \$25 to replace. Model year 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019 vehicles were most likely to have a gas cap-related problem, which is data that can be useful to automotive aftermarket parts retailers for inventory forecasting.

The 2022 Index statistically analyzes more than 17 million failures and recommended repairs for vehicles in the U.S., over the past calendar year. This year's Vehicle Health Index as well as historical reports are available [here](#).

CarMD also offers a free online vehicle inspection service available at <https://www.carmd.com/wp/garage/> to get service information, predictive failures, recalls, technical service bulletins and other proactive vehicle health information.

About the CarMD Vehicle Health Index

Published annually since 2011, the CarMD Vehicle Health Index is the first and most comprehensive industry report to provide consumers and the automotive aftermarket with year-over-year check engine light repair insight. When used with resources such as [CarMD Garage](#), it can help owners better understand and budget for repairs. When used in conjunction with other resources such as Innova [RepairSolutions2](#) and the CarMD [PRO SCAN](#) inspection solution, this Index can provide insight to repair professionals on the type of parts most likely needed a when a car rolls into the service bay.

Since 1996, every car, light truck, SUV, minivan and hybrid sold in the United States has been required to have an on-board diagnostic (OBDII) system. It monitors roughly 80% of a vehicle's systems to trigger the check engine light and alert drivers about issues related to emissions, fuel economy, drivability, and cost of ownership.

CarMD is uniquely qualified to provide unbiased data on repair costs and trends having built the most dynamic database of failures and repairs related to vehicle on-board diagnostic systems. The data comes directly from each vehicle's OBDII system, reported by millions of vehicle owners and the professionals who service them. The failure and fix data are validated by CarMD's network of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-certified technicians.

About CarMD

Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., CarMD.com Corporation is a leading provider of automotive diagnostic business solutions, including [CarMD PRO SCAN](#), digital automotive aftermarket platform services and vehicle data licensing. CarMD specializes in automotive technology solutions that leverage and empower the capabilities of the on-board diagnostics (OBD) port. Published tri-annually, the CarMD® Vehicle Health Index™ reports on automotive repair and maintenance trends. For more information about CarMD's automotive aftermarket solutions, including current and archived Vehicle Health Index reports, visit www.carmd.com.

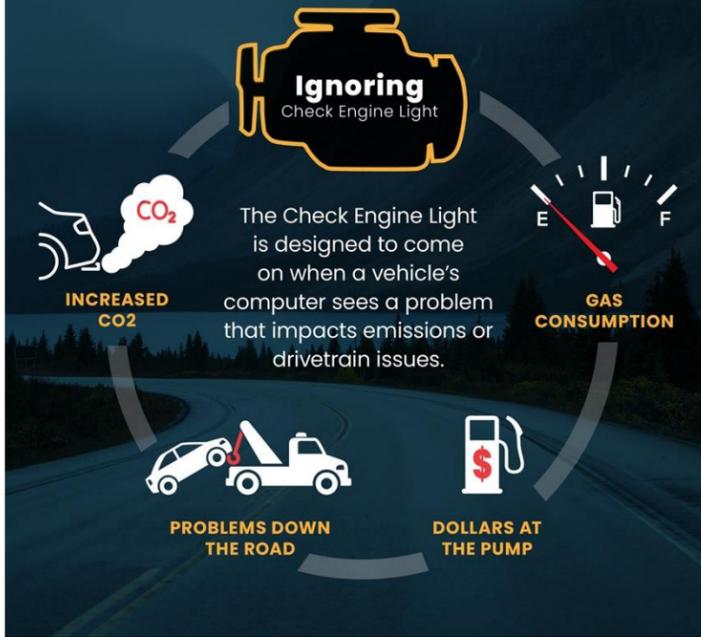
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AT A GLANCE

As gas prices skyrocket and the average vehicle age jumps to 12.1 years old, vehicle owners are focused on how to extend vehicle life and save money.

The 2022 CarMD Vehicle Health Index analyzes more than 17 million check engine light-related failures and recommended repairs for vehicles in the U.S., over the past calendar year.

Here's what you need to know:



Don't Panic

It might be something serious like a failing engine, but it's more likely to be a loose gas cap



Cha Ching at the Pump!

If ignored, driving with the check engine light on will hurt your car's fuel economy – even if it seems like the car is driving fine.

Average cost of a CEL repair in 2021? \$393

5 Most Common CEL Repairs

- Catalytic Converter**
\$1,355
- O₂ O2 Sensor**
\$242
- Ignition Coils & Spark Plugs**
\$387
- Mass Airflow Sensor**
\$319
- Gas Cap**
>\$25

Vehicle Age Impacts CEL Problems

CarMD found that a 14-year-old vehicle is most likely to need a check engine light-related repair with brand new (still under warranty) cars and trucks least likely to have an issue. Here's the breakdown:

