



MIKES CORVETTE CORNER

Cabin air filters:

It's easy to ignore a vehicle's cabin air filter(s) — out of sight, out of mind. Let's be honest: It's easy to simply forget that they exist in the first place.

However, starting with select models in the 1990s, cabin air filters have become commonplace, with over 80% of new cars fitted with these cockpit cleansers. Replacing these filters benefits both the vehicle owner and the shop that is smart enough to highlight these filters on their standard lube and filter checklist.

Cabin air filters are generally made of pleated paper or fleece and activated carbon. It sounds simple enough, but automakers and filter engineers have invested substantial R&D hours in order to determine materials, size, shape and location for these filters. Granted, cars of yesterday weren't equipped with passenger compartment air-filtering devices, and nobody griped. Back in the 1960s and '70s, if someone said we needed to install an air intake system that would filter cabin air, he or she would have probably been laughed at. In today's health-conscious society, you'd be ridiculed if you said there was no need for

such a system. The world keeps changing and we simply need to adapt and keep up. Cabin filters are here and we need to deal with them.

Cabin air filters provide three key benefits:

- They improve breathing safety by removing dust, pollen and other allergens.
- In certain instances, they also help to remove unpleasant odors via the filter's activated charcoal layer (at least helping to nix the stink of a skunk, the perfumed air of a farm's fertilized fields or the Diesel smell from an over-fueling Diesel).
- Cabin air filters help to protect the vehicle's HVAC system blower fan from ingesting damaging particles.

Note that once a vehicle has been outfitted with a cabin air filtration system, this creates an air path to the HVAC blower fan. If airflow through the filter is restricted, the blower motor is forced to work harder (similar to a clogged filter on your home furnace).

Cabin air filters should be replaced about every 15,000 to 30,000 miles. Vehicles operated in dusty environments should be treated to a fresh filter at least every 15,000 miles.

Air quality issues aside, be aware that humidity and storage times can easily contribute to filter issues. In damp conditions, especially for a Corvette that is stored for extended periods, the filter can easily become moldy, storing spores that are trying to work

their way through the filter.

It should be obvious at this point that I recommend simply make it a standard part of routine maintenance, instead of treating it like the "filter whose name must never be mentioned."

Depending on vehicle age and model, the filter will likely be accessed underhood, via a removable cowl panel on the passenger side; or via the glove box compartment (the glovebox tray may need to pivot down to gain access).

And its true, a lot of people don't even know their Corvette or daily driver is equipped with a cabin filter. So, go to that owners manual and see if your car is fitted with a cabin filter.

Regards

Mike