

Check Engine Light Goes On

Article by: Naum Levinson

What to do if the "check engine" light goes on?

It does mean that you should get the car checked out as soon as possible. If you ignore this warning, you can damage some expensive components, and get poor gas mileage.

What this light is trying to tell you?

This light is a part of the On-Board Diagnostic system (OBD II) The engine systems performance is being controlled and monitored by computer. When the computer finds a problem in any system, it waits a little for the possibility that the faulty system will correct itself. If this doesn't happen, the computer turns on the "check engine" light. At the same time, the computer stores a "trouble code" in the memory. This code identifies the system or component that is malfunctioning. Code can be read with the special scanning tool.

If the "check engine" light turns "on", it will either blink or remain solid, depending on the problem. The blinking light indicates a serious problem that requires immediate attention. Most of the time it is an engine misfire. In this case, the unburned fuel gets into the exhaust system where it can explode and severely damage the catalytic converter. Repair will be expensive. The solid "check engine" light indicates a non-emergency, but the car or truck should be checked ASAP.

Tip: on late model vehicles, loose gas cap will trigger the "check engine" light. The first thing you do, try to tighten your gas cap first. After a while, the light will turn off but the trouble code will remain in memory. Mr. Naum Levinson was born in Eastern Europe.

He holds a Masters Degree in Mechanical Engineering, specializing in automotive design.

He has over 35 years of experience in vehicle research, development, maintenance, and repair.

On his website <http://www.best-auto-repairs.com>, he shares his life experience with readers, and stresses the point that the best repair is a preventive maintenance system.

His other interests are computers, travel, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

He lives with his family in La Mesa, California