

Power steering maintenance

It's 5 p.m. and you're on your way home from work. Traffic is bumper to bumper. The AC is on and the radio is playing your favorite song. Then you take notice that other drivers are staring at you. "How rude," you think, but when you pull off the freeway and you're driving through town, people on the street corners are staring at you, even their pets are barking. As you pull into your driveway and into the garage, then you hear it! A loud winding noise. So loud it has you shaking. "Could this be the Twilight Zone?" No, it's your power steering pump.

The power steering system is always overlooked when it comes to maintenance. How many readers owned a Chevy Citation in the early 80's? They were known for morning sickness. When cold, the steering would turn hard, sometimes only to one side. After it would build heat, the power steering was okay. What would happen is seals inside the steering rack would get hard and put grooves inside the housing. Heat would expand the seal and stop leakage pass the seal and presto, the power steering was back. Was it due to faulty design or lack of maintenance? It could have been both.

Today's systems are smaller, lighter, some even have pressure sensors to tell the engine computer when the steering is being turned. Basic systems only hold about two pints of fluid. And the fluid is always flowing and when under pressure (turning the vehicle), it gets hotter. Some vehicles even have coolers for the fluid.

Our shop has been trying to educate our customers about the importance of flushing the steering system. Our shop has seen inside of the power steering hoses deteriorate away and pieces of the hose will ruin the steering gear and the pump. Sometimes a flush will fix it, until the hose deteriorates some more. But usually it is too late. That's why power steering service is important, just like any other maintenance.

Remember, a little maintenance here and there help prevent larger problems, (and money), later on. Or maybe you may be the next "Twilight Zone" victim.

Call Dave's Auto Service, Inc. at 610-367-1844, located at 925 W. Phila. Ave., Boyertown, for fast and reliable service.