

# Driven

NADA MANAGEMENT SERIES

SP15

A DEALER GUIDE TO

## Maintenance Menus



NATIONAL  
AUTOMOBILE  
DEALERS  
ASSOCIATION





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A DEALER GUIDE TO

# Maintenance Menus

## Executive Summary

Using maintenance menus benefits dealerships and customers alike. Menus can make the service advisor's job easier, increase revenues in the service department and help customers become more informed about their vehicles. In this guide, we discuss not only printed menus but electronic menus and digital devices that can be used to access customized maintenance schedules.

It's important to ensure that all customers who come in for service get a printed menu. The printout can come from the manufacturer or companies that produce power steering flushing fluids, or it can be an electronic menu pulled from a vehicle's VIN. Service advisors can use an on-board diagnostics (OBD) II to access self-diagnostics information from a vehicle's onboard computer. Or they can use a cell phone to click on QR codes to access the menus. Either way, advisors should go over printouts of the menus with customers to discuss what services their vehicles need, and when their next service visit should be.



## I. The Case for Maintenance Menus

Maintenance menus are an effective service department marketing tool. Using menus can make the service advisor's job easier, generate additional sales of needed service and get customers into the habit of taking their vehicles to dealerships for maintenance.

Counseling customers on the care of their cars can be difficult and time-consuming for a service advisor if there is no organized process in place for doing so. Maintenance menus make it simple. So we recommend having several electronic and/or paper menus prepared to show what's needed, at appropriate mileage and time intervals, for all brands you service. Consistently show the relevant menu to every customer so that he or she can see what service package is recommended, according to:

- ▶ Manufacturer specifications,
- ▶ Warranty requirements (based on mileage or month intervals) and
- ▶ Local dealership recommendations based on climate and driving conditions.

Update your menus periodically so that they continually reflect any changes in these elements. If your menu claims that all the operations listed are required by the manufacturer, make sure that they are required. (You can still list routine service operations that aren't required by the manufacturer. In the [Appendix](#), the sample maintenance menu includes "Dealer-Recommended Options.")

## II. How Menus Benefit Your Dealership

Every customer who brings a vehicle in for service should receive a maintenance menu. This single step can increase labor and parts sales and items per repair order (RO). Further, maintenance menus provide:

- ▶ A soft-sell approach to selling needed service.
- ▶ A one-price, complete maintenance package.
- ▶ A quick, easy and efficient road map for technicians.
- ▶ A way to remind the customer when the next service is due.
- ▶ A means to encourage compliance with warranty requirements.
- ▶ A standard system for service advisors to work from.
- ▶ Credibility for the selling process, because they show customers in writing the recommended maintenance for their vehicles.

## What do power steering flushing chemicals have to do with anything?

NADA Academy instructor Bob Atwood says, "Power steering fluid degrades and when it does, this causes the rack to leak."

Fortunately, Atwood adds, four chemical companies sell chemicals that flush power steering fluids to reduce wear. These companies print all the maintenance menus for their dealership customers and provide the menus to them at no charge.

**\$99** POWER STEERING  
FLUID

**\$1000** RACK  
REPLACEMENT

Some manufacturers say there's no need to flush the power steering fluids from their cars, and that by flushing the fluids you're adding to the cost of ownership. But Atwood holds that by flushing fluids, customers are being proactive about maintaining the car, lengthening its life, and lowering the cost of ownership.

"Most dealerships charge \$99 to replace power steering fluid, but the cost to replace a rack is almost \$1,000. So do the math," Atwood says.

Service advisors can give the appropriate maintenance menu to customers whenever they come into the store, Atwood says. Or, advisors can put a menu into each night-drop envelope. That way, every customer leaving a car for service can take the menu home.

### III. How Menus Benefit Customers

Few customers actually use their factory manuals to follow maintenance schedules, so most of them appreciate a reminder of what services are needed at which time or mileage intervals. Even if they don't buy the service on the spot, you've made them aware that they need to have the service done soon.

Menus benefit customers in several ways:

- ▶ Often the service package costs less than the individual services priced separately.
- ▶ Customers run less risk of having their vehicles break down if they keep up with their regularly scheduled maintenance.
- ▶ By referring to their maintenance menus, customers will know what to expect at their next visit

#### Printed Menus, Digital Devices

NADA recommends that service advisors counsel customers on the proper care and maintenance of their vehicles. Many dealers have several different menus to offer their customers for each franchise their dealership services. Often called "A," "B" and "C" menus, these printed pamphlets list pre-set mileage or time intervals at which customers must get regular maintenance. Here's an example:

Menu	Mileage Interval	or	Time Interval
A	5,000 to 7,500 miles		6 months
B	15,000 miles <i>and</i> 45,000 miles		12 months
			36 months
C	30,000 miles <i>and</i> 60,000 miles		30 months
			60 months

### IV. How to Present Menus to Customers

When a customer enters your service lane, carefully listen to his or her concerns and comments. If the vehicle is due for a maintenance package, chances are that performing those services for the vehicle will solve the problem. In any event, be sure to identify the customer's prime concern and see that it's addressed properly.

Next, note the vehicle's mileage and review the service history. For customers who've made appointments, pull and review their service histories before they arrive. They will appreciate your conscientiousness, and it will save time in the service lane. Most computer systems show repair history and recommended maintenance on the RO header.

After reviewing the service history, hand the customer the appropriate A, B or C menu. Here are some ways to start the menu presentation:

- ▶ "Based on your mileage and service history, I recommend that we do a \_\_\_\_\_,000 mile maintenance service on your car today."
- ▶ "We realize that caring for your car can be expensive. So we've priced these maintenance items as a package to save you money."
- ▶ "This is a list of services the factory recommends that you have done at this mileage. These services will help you avoid inconvenience at a later date, keep your car running well and protect your investment."

After presenting the menu, wait quietly for the customer's reply, which lets you know what you need to do to win his or her confidence and the sale.

### Prohibition on "Tie-In" Provisions

Among other things, the Magnusson-Moss Warranty Act prohibits a warrantor from conditioning a consumer product's warranty on the consumer's use of an article or a service (other than an article or a service provided without charge). (See 15 U.S.C. § 2302(c).) As a result, manufacturer warranties generally cannot require a consumer to have customer-pay maintenance performed at a dealership. Therefore, while dealers can inform consumers about maintenance that may be required under the warranty, they should not state or imply that a customer is required to pay to have such work performed at the dealership.

OBD II is a standardized system that service advisors use to access self-diagnostic information from a vehicle's computer.



Some customers may ask you to exclude items from the menu to reduce the cost of the service. It's your job to remind them that the parts and labor pricing for the service menu is a package price that will save them money, and that when items are deleted, the dealership must revert to a per-item cost.

Note: Customers are required to maintain their vehicles in accordance with manufacturers' recommended maintenance schedules. A manufacturer can refuse to honor a customer's warranty if the maintenance schedule is not followed. It is not mandatory that the maintenance is performed at a dealership; however, customers can be encouraged to have it performed there, and to maintain records of their service wherever it is performed.

Many dealerships use electronic rather than paper menus to determine what service is needed. OBD indicates exactly what problem is affecting which subsystem of a vehicle. When a customer pulls into the service drive, the service advisor can plug a laptop into the 16-pin connector under the vehicle dashboard and input the VIN and mileage. An electronic menu specific to that vehicle appears on the laptop screen with real-time data and diagnostic trouble codes to help identify malfunctions within the vehicle. The advisor can hit "print," pull the hard copy off a printer, and go over a personalized maintenance schedule with the customer.

Whether they're paper or electronic, menus:

- ▶ Bolster sales of repair and maintenance services.
- ▶ Ensure consistent presentation of services.
- ▶ Improve communication with customers.

#### Cell Phones and QR Codes

Yet another method of accessing a maintenance schedule is tied to QR codes. With a cell phone or tablet, an advisor can click on the QR code printed on a maintenance menu, prompting an electronic menu customized for an individual vehicle to appear. The advisor can show the electronic menu to the customer and print it for him.



Sample QR code

If you use maintenance menus:

- ▶ Calculate the cost of each maintenance package by adding the labor hours and parts prices required, plus any taxes and shop supplies that will be needed. Then decide on an appropriate discount for the package. You can show the customer what it would cost to buy all services separately and the total savings if he or she buys the package instead.
- ▶ Note any parts that have different prices for different car models.
- ▶ Color-code your menus so that your service advisors can tell the A, B and C menus apart at a glance.
- ▶ Note that the pricing for certain jobs will be based on a unit price. (For example, the parts department collects a predetermined amount per spark plug, regardless of whether six or eight are needed.)

Finally, make sure your customers know when they should come in next, and what services they can expect to be done during their next visit. The customer should have a printed maintenance schedule in hand so that there will be no confusion about what service will be needed to keep his or her vehicle in compliance with its warranty and in good operating condition.

## Sample 30,000 Miles or 30 Months Maintenance Schedule

**Regular Maintenance**

- Replace engine oil and filter
- Replace climate-controlled seat filter, if so equipped
- Replace engine air filter
- Replace in-cabin microfilter
- Rotate tires

Inspect the following:

- \_\_\_ Automatic transmission fluid\*
- \_\_\_ eCVT fluid (HEV)\*
- \_\_\_ Axle and suspension parts
- \_\_\_ Brake lines and cables
- \_\_\_ Brake pads, rotors, drums and linings
- \_\_\_ Cruise control vacuum hoses
- \_\_\_ CVT fluid, if applicable
- \_\_\_ Differential oil\*
- \_\_\_ Drive shaft boots
- \_\_\_ Exhaust system
- \_\_\_ Front suspension ball joints
- \_\_\_ Fuel lines / connections
- \_\_\_ Fuel tank vapor vent system hoses
- \_\_\_ Manual transmission oil\*
- \_\_\_ Propeller shaft (4WD / AWD / RWD)
- \_\_\_ Steering linkage ball joints
- \_\_\_ Transfer case oil (4WD / AWD)\*

**Total Regular Maintenance Cost** \_\_\_\_\_

\* Synthetic fluids are extra. Some models may be slightly higher. Ask your advisor for details. Price includes shop supplies and disposal fees.

**Premium Maintenance\*\***

Premium maintenance adds the following services to Schedule 1:

- Lubricate all locks, hinges
- Replace automatic transmission / CVT / eCVT fluid
- Replace engine coolant
- Replace engine drive belts
- Replace manual transmission oil (if applicable)
- Replace radiator cap
- Replace wiper blades
- Inspect the following:
  - \_\_\_ All interior lights
  - \_\_\_ Headlights, taillights/adjust if necessary

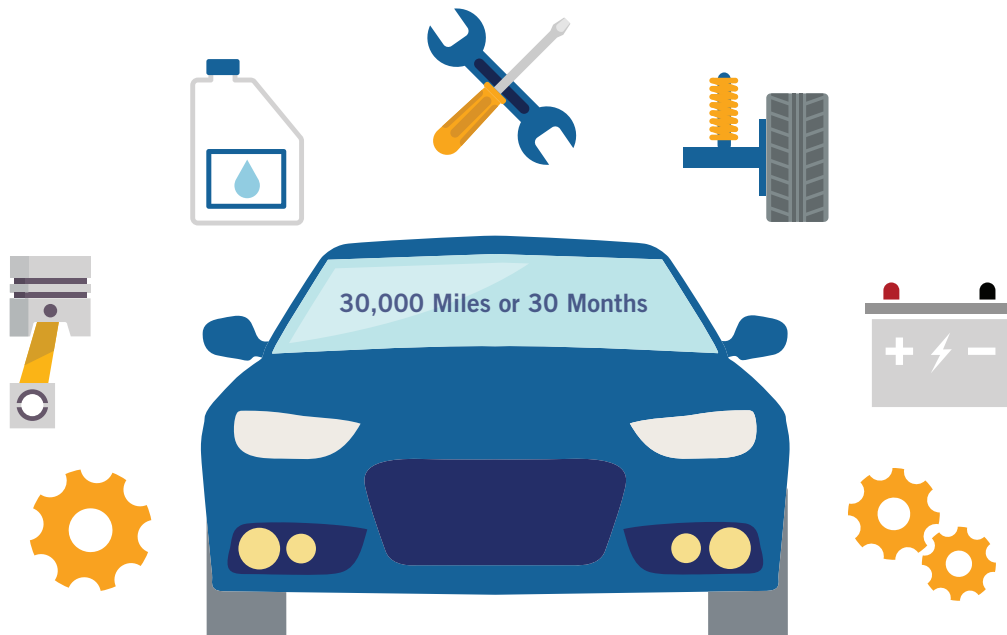
**Total Premium Maintenance** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dealer-Recommended Options**

- Perform automatic transmission flush (if applicable)
- Perform engine coolant flush

**Total Price (including dealer recommendations)**  
(less 10% package discount)

\*\* 10% off total price if all Premium Maintenance items are performed.





## Acknowledgments

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For contributing invaluable information to this guide, NADA gratefully acknowledges:

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This guide was edited by:

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