Diesel Particulate Filters: What Drivers Need to Know

Wednesday 23 August, 2023

With the increasing popularity of diesel vehicles, it's important for drivers to be aware of the potential issues that can arise with Diesel Particulate Filters (DPFs). DPFs are filters that capture and store exhaust soot in order to reduce emissions from diesel cars. They have been mandatory on diesel cars since 2009 and are vital to keeping toxic diesel-specific emissions down.

However, DPFs can become clogged if not properly maintained. The main cause of DPF clogging is driving short distances or at low speeds, which prevents the engine from reaching its optimal temperature and generating enough heat to burn off the soot in the filter. This is especially common in urban areas, where there are frequent stops and starts, traffic jams, and low-speed limits.

Other factors that can contribute to DPF clogging include poor servicing, using the wrong type of oil, performance modifications, using low-quality fuel, and even running the car frequently on a low fuel level.

It's important for drivers to be aware of these potential issues and to take steps to prevent them. If you only do short trips or drive mostly in urban areas, it may be best to avoid buying a diesel vehicle. Regular servicing and using the right type of oil can also help prevent DPF clogging.

In addition to taking preventative measures, there are also methods available for maintaining the performance of a Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) once it has become clogged. These methods include DPF Cleaning and Regeneration.

DPF regeneration refers to the procedure of cleaning and emptying the diesel particulate filter of soot that is created by the process of combustion. The most common method of clearing a DPF is through a process called regeneration. Regeneration is a process in which the engine is made to run at a high temperature in order to burn off the particles trapped in the filter.

DPF Cleaning, on the other hand, is a service offered by some auto repair shops to clean the filter and restore its performance. For example, Tektronic Autocentre offers two DPF cleaning options: DPF Maintenance Clean and DPF Deep Clean.

The DPF Maintenance Clean is designed for drivers making lots of short trips, where the engine isn't getting hot enough to burn off excess soot. This product should be used every six months to keep your engine free from build-up.

If your filter has moderate to severe build-up then the DPF Deep Clean may be the only option to avoid a complete filter replacement. As part of the Deep Clean, their highly skilled technicians will inject a special cleaning agent into the filter to remove the blockage.

In summary, DPF Regeneration is a process that occurs automatically while driving, while DPF Cleaning is a service that can be performed by an auto repair shop. Both methods can help maintain the performance of your DPF and prevent clogging.

Hopefully, this answers a few unasked questions. Unfortunately, in most cases, we don't know these intricate systems exist until we need them repaired.

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