



The Dealer Alternative



## ***Time to Stow the Cell***

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, California joined New York and a number of other states by banning the use of handheld phones while driving.

Two laws, SB 33 and SB 1613, require that drivers over the age of 18 use some form of "hands-free device" if they wish to talk on their phone while driving. The laws also ban any minor from using their phone while driving, even if they are using a hands-free device.

Acceptable hands-free devices for adults include a corded or Bluetooth headset, the speaker phone feature present in many phones, or a car stereo featuring integrated Bluetooth support. These stereos are present in many new-model cars and add-on kits can be purchased for most other stereos if Bluetooth support wasn't a standard feature.

According to the California DMV,

the laws cover both traditional conversations and those using the push-to-talk ("direct connect") feature but do not specifically prohibit dialing or texting while driving. Clearly, both of these activities are unsafe and you may still be ticketed if you appear to be distracted.

The DMV also reminds drivers that only one ear may be covered when using a headset because every driver

must be able to hear the sirens of oncoming emergency personnel.

Both laws provide exceptions for emergencies. In such cases, the laws allow the use of your phone to call law enforcement, fire and medical personnel.

A driver caught without their hands-free device will receive a \$20 fine if they're a first offender or a \$50 fine for subsequent offenses. However, with additional penalties, the total fine may exceed three times the base value of the ticket. Citations will not result in a point on your driving record; however, they will be recorded by the DMV for tracking purposes.

It is important to remember that your first responsibility is to be aware of your surroundings, not your conversation. Stowing the phone is the best option for everyone on the road.



# HAGIN'S

## AUTOMOTIVE

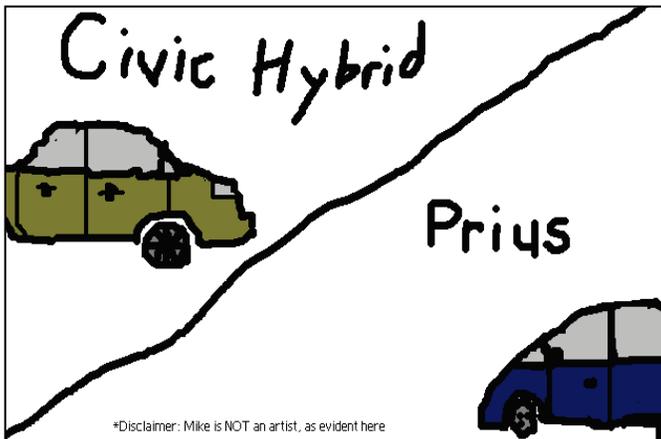


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Car Care News You Can Use

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## Hybrids: Fact or Fiction



Rising fuel prices and increasing concern for the environment have led to the growing popularity of hybrid vehicles.

However, for some potential buyers, the relatively new nature of the technology gives them pause and there are still quite a few myths regarding the operation, safety and longevity of these vehicles.

We have listed some of the more common myths below in hopes that it will help you decide if your next car should be a hybrid.

### MYTH #1: Hybrid batteries go bad.

We think not! This is probably the myth we hear most frequently and it's completely untrue.

Technical jargon aside, the US Department of Energy tested a group of hybrid batteries for 160 thousand miles before it got bored and threw in the towel. Testing was halted because there was still no appreciable performance loss, even after so many miles. As a general rule, the hybrid batteries should last as long as any other major part of the car.

### MYTH #2:

**You'll save money by driving a hybrid.**

It's ill advised to buy a hybrid in an attempt to save money. You will indeed pay less for gas; however, the savings are quickly lost when you factor in the premium placed upon the price of the vehicle.

You can buy a hybrid for the environment or for bragging rights; but, if you are looking to save money over the long haul, then you're better off buying a Civic or other small, yet fuel efficient, car.

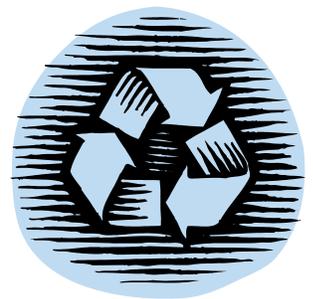
### MYTH #3:

**Hybrids lack power.**

It's true that the gas engine in a hybrid is often smaller than it would be on a comparable gas-only counterpart. This doesn't really mean that a hybrid is underpowered, just a bit different. The truth is that a hybrid is in the unique position to use a traditional gasoline engine and an

See *HYBRIDS*, Page 2

## The GREEN Issue!!!



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## INSIDE

- \* **Drains, Flushes and Exchanges**
- \* **Meet the Shuttle Staff**
- \* **Is it Time for a New Car?**

**HYBRIDS  
FROM PAGE ONE**

electric motor in order to maximize both power and efficiency at all times.

**MYTH #4:**

**A hybrid needs to be plugged in.**

Just because a hybrid vehicle has an electric motor does not mean that it must be plugged in.

The motor used to assist the engine actually gets its power from a battery that is charged whenever the hybrid slows. This energy – lost when a normal car stops – is captured by the hybrid's special braking system.

This technology has been used in railroad locomotives for years but only recently has it become adaptable to the average passenger car.

**MYTH #5**

**Emergency personnel think they're dangerous.**

We've heard concerns that emergency personnel may not be able to assist drivers of hybrids in the case of an accident. Not to worry, emergency services throughout the country have been trained about safety concerns unique to hybrid vehicles so that they may respond appropriately.

The manufacturers have also taken great pains to alleviate the chance of accidental injury during emergency responses.

**MYTH #6:**

**It's hard to find shops that can work on them.**

We love working on hybrids. They are the future and we are ready to provide service for all our customers' hybrid-related needs.

## Meet Sid and Bill



Our last newsletter gave you the chance to meet our technicians and office staff. This month we would like to highlight the contributions of two other invaluable team members: Sid Cruiser and Bill Tillson. Sid and Bill are our top-notch shuttle duo. If you are ever in need of a ride, just say so when you make your appointment so Sid and Bill can save you a seat.

Above and beyond getting you where you need to go, Sid and Bill are also responsible for many other day-to-day responsibilities around the shop. We truly appreciate all of their help, hard work and dedication. It is thanks to Sid and Bill that we are able to provide you with the exceptional customer service you have come to expect during your visits.

## Andy Says: Flushes and Exchanges



Those who work in the automotive industry take great pride in creating new terms for the work they can perform. Sadly, this vice has led to some consumer confusion and many people are unsure of the difference between a fluid flush and a fluid exchange.

Both services are designed to extend the life of critical components by ensuring the vehicle isn't using contaminated fluid; however, that is where the similarities end.

An exchange usually relies upon the vehicle's own power to move fresh fluid through the vehicle in the normal direction at (or near) standard operating

pressure. In contrast, a flush uses more force to push solvents and new fluid through the system in the reverse direction.

Not surprisingly, many auto manufacturers don't like flushes because they can cause transmission or engine damage if they are not performed properly.

We are in agreement with the manufacturers when it comes to flushes. The benefits simply don't outweigh the risks because damage may occur if a screen becomes clogged with debris or if the excess pressure placed upon the system damages any number of small components.

That is why we only

perform fluid exchanges. It's our thought that the work we perform shouldn't leave your vehicle in worse shape than when it arrived. Exchanges take a bit longer, but the extra time spent is a small price to pay if it means we are able to keep your vehicle in tip-top shape.

Exchanges are advised every 30 to 60 thousand miles, depending upon fluid condition. Condition can be affected by driving habits, environmental factors and how fervently you follow your vehicle's maintenance schedule. Regular fluid drain and refills performed during services can keep your fluids cleaner, longer.

## Is It Time For A New Car?



*Sometimes, the choice isn't quite so apparent...*

Inevitably, you will one day question if it's the "right" time to buy a new car. The answer is that there is rarely a right time.

People who ask this are often faced with a large repair bill, perhaps on a car that they see as being a bit long in the tooth.

Becoming a bit skittish about your car or truck as the odometer climbs ever higher is natural, but we have some good news: many of our customers own vehicles that are still going strong even after 200 thousand miles.

That is not to say it has been all smooth sailing and we know that one or two expensive repairs over the course of a few years may seem like a burden; however, buying a new car is rarely a more cost-effective option.

Most people find it remarkably easy to forget the additional expenses associated with the purchase of a new car.

Expenses to be mindful of include taxes, more

costly services, increased insurance premiums and higher registration fees.

If you choose to buy a used car, rather than a new one, you may be able to limit the additional expenses associated with a new purchase; however, a thorough inspection is in order if you opt to take this route. An inspection helps verify that the car you are buying doesn't harbor similar (or perhaps worse) problems than the vehicle you are trying to get rid of.

The deciding factor is ultimately one of personal choice and finances. If you have the money and the inclination, you may wish to consider a new car; otherwise, your current car is likely able to provide you with reliable transportation for many years to come.

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We always appreciate hearing from you! We encourage you to send any thoughts or questions that you may have to: [haginsauto@hotmail.com](mailto:haginsauto@hotmail.com)



## Tech Tips: Being Green

In honor of being recertified as a Contra Costa County Green Business, we have put together a list of ways you too can lessen your environmental impact.



### Jeff

*"Make your next car a hybrid"*

Jeff and his family have opted to purchase a more environmentally friendly vehicle, namely the Toyota Prius. Even if the Prius isn't right for you, there are many different hybrids on the market and the chances are you can find one that fits your lifestyle. In any case, you can likely bank on lower carbon emissions and better fuel economy.



### Mike

*"Purchase a carbon offset"*

Prevention is key; even so, offsetting emissions that you cannot avoid is important too. Mike offsets the pollution his car produces by making a fully tax-deductible donation to carbonfund.org (though there are MANY other options).

Donations fund reforestation, alternative energy initiatives and educational programs. These activities help to balance out – or offset – the carbon Loki (his car) produces on a daily basis.



### Jesse & Sid

*"Recycle"*



One word says it all. Both Jesse and Sid are avid recyclers. In fact, on more than one occasion Mike has had to fend them off as they attempted to recycle an aluminum can containing his half-consumed *Full Throttle*.

Recycling facilitates the reuse of natural resources and, when combined with good old-fashioned conservation, does the most to reduce our impact on the planet.

