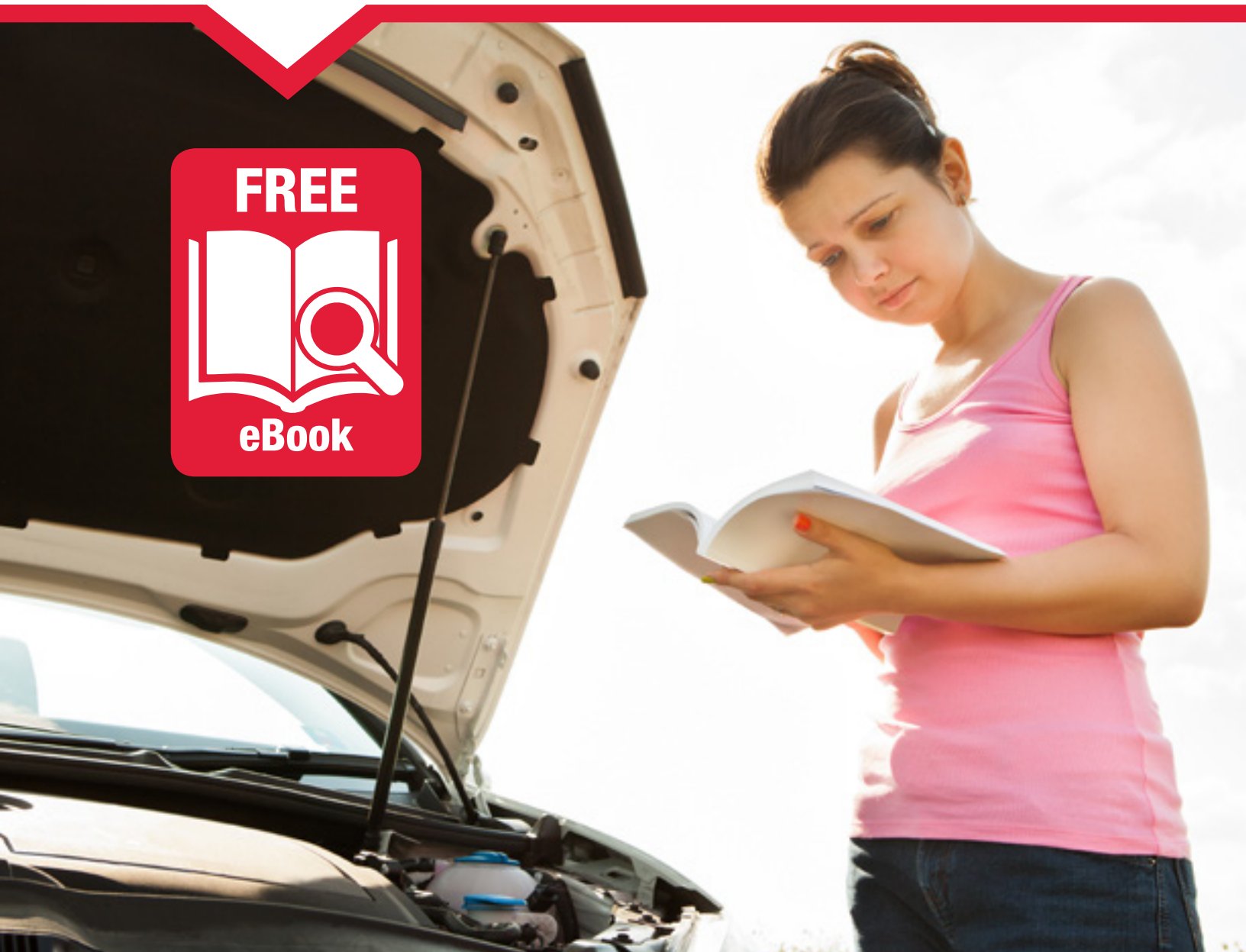


# The **10-Minute** **Automotive Repair** Guide



Andy Mohr **BUICK GMC**

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**AndyMohrGMCBuick.com**  
9295 E. 131<sup>st</sup> St., Fishers, IN 46038



**BUICK GMC**



**W**hen it comes to cars, there's no better feeling than driving yours home for the very first time. From the hum of the engine to the sharp handling and high response of the brakes, it'll truly run like a dream. It'll run so well, in fact, that you might never think any problems will ever occur.

Of course, automotive issues are natural from time to time. Every vehicle is comprised of tons of moving parts—some large and some small. You should expect that at some point, a few pieces are going to go bad.

When they do, will you know how to take care of things? If not, you'll definitely want to check out this quick guide, where we break down all the most common vehicle repairs and how to prevent them.



## What Are the Most Common Car Problems?

With so many different parts and features in your car, there are a lot of different issues you may encounter over the years. Nevertheless, it seems that there are a few that keep popping up time and again, across all makes and models. According to CarMD, these are the top 10.

### Oxygen Sensor

Surprisingly, one of the top issues is something you'd probably never guess. The oxygen sensor, also known as a lambda sensor, performs a fairly innocuous function. Nevertheless, it's a crucial one. It monitors how much unburned oxygen is in the exhaust as it exits the engine. This data is then sent back to your vehicle's computer system.

High oxygen levels in your exhaust are equivalent to high emissions. So, when the sensor goes, you may be on track for an emissions test failure.

### Catalytic Converter

The catalytic converter is another major component of your vehicle emissions, as it manages the entire system.





The bad news with these is that they tend to be very costly to replace. The good news? They don't often go bad unless the system has been neglected. As long as your car receives regular tune-ups, it shouldn't be too hard to keep the catalytic converter in good shape.

## Spark Plugs

Spark plugs are a component you've surely heard of before, even if you're not exactly certain what they do. Their function is simple: they ignite the fuel within your engine's cylinders. It's only natural that these wear over time.

If you buy cheaper spark plugs, they could last anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 miles.

Meanwhile, more expensive iridium or platinum spark plugs can last upwards of 60,000 miles. You'll want to have these changed as soon as they start to go. Faulty plugs can greatly reduce your vehicle's mileage. If they wear down even more, they can even melt your expensive catalytic converter.

## Ignition Coil

Ignition coils and spark plugs go hand in hand. The coil lets the spark plugs know when they're supposed to operate (or fire). Any faults on their part can lead to some major damage to your ignition system. Trust us, your wallet won't like that.

## Fuel Cap

The fuel cap is likely one of the least expensive fixes you'll encounter. If left off, the cap will trigger your check engine light. In some cases, this may be due to your own forgetfulness. However, if the cap is old and the threads are worn or broken, it'll need to be replaced.

Leaving the gas cap off your car can cause minor evaporative leaks. The fuel loss from these leaks may seem minimal, but over time, they equate to a lot of money out the window.

## Thermostat

The thermostat keeps tabs on the temperature of your engine, including how hot your engine coolant may be. It's not hard for the thermostat to wear over time. Without it, your engine could overheat without you even knowing it—a one-time incident that could cause long-term damage.

## Mass Air Flow Sensor

Some people may treat air filter replacement like it's only "optional" maintenance. However, if you fail to do so, that old and dirty filter will eventually compromise the air flow sensor.

A sensor may seem like a more insignificant part; however, it serves a crucial function. The air flow sensor gauges how much air is supplied to the engine, which tells your car how

much fuel to supply it. When it breaks down, the fix is a major one.

## Manifold Gasket

The manifold gasket is what keeps undue gasoline and air from getting in between your engine parts. Over time, this faulty blend leads to serious and irreparable engine corrosion.

When the manifold gasket leaks, a lot of nasty material can get into your engine parts. Ultimately, your performance, emissions, and fuel efficiency will all suffer. Despite the cost, it's better to replace this part as often as it needs.

## Exhaust Gas Recirculation Valve

To maintain your car's efficiency, some of the exhaust needs to be sent back through the engine for a second pass. As you might have guessed from its name, that's exactly what the exhaust gas recirculation valve is for. Without it, your emissions would be through the roof and your car would start eating gas.

## Aftermarket Alarm

Though it's one of the most common repairs, the catch with aftermarket alarm removal is just that: the alarm is an aftermarket part. If you don't attempt to tinker with the alarm system (as many do), it should be fine. Adding one in, however, could cause several problems to arise not just in the part itself, but elsewhere in the vehicle.



## The Trouble Areas

While the aforementioned parts may be some of the most common to create problems, there are certain areas of the car that will consistently require attention and work.

- **Brakes:** There are two areas of the car that seem to bear the brunt of your punishment, and the brakes are one of them. From pads to calipers and rotors, they can very easily take great deals of damage. Go easy on them, or they could cost you.

- **Tires:** The second area of the car that takes a lot of abuse is the tires. Even if you don't intend to drive them hard, you never know

what you might be getting them into. Rough terrain, harsh weather, glass or nails on the road—it's all difficult to predict. Fortunately, most tire care is simple.

- **Electrical System:** While small lights and fuses may be the most common aspects of the electrical system, there's a lot more to it than that. It's common that a part of this system will blow from time to time.





- **Coolant System:** Leaks in the radiator and cooling system aren't very uncommon and can be affected by the weather. You'll want to jump on them as soon as they arise.

- **Ignition System:** The battery, starter, and ignition all fall within this system. The kinds of problems you'll encounter here could range from something small and

inexpensive, like simple charging, or something far costlier.

- **Transmission:** We've saved this one for last because, well, it's one of the least pleasant. The transmission will rarely give you an issue that's simple and cheap—quite the contrary, actually. As soon as something seems awry, be sure to have it checked out.



## The Big Problems Are Preventable

When it comes to collision damage, repair is inevitable. However, it is avoidable in most other areas as long as you provide your car with some basic, preventative maintenance. In the end, having these minor repairs done will save you a pile of money.

### Change Your Oil Regularly

Undoubtedly, oil changes are one of the quickest and cheapest bits of preventative maintenance that you can perform on your car. Nevertheless, it's also one of the most pertinent. Oil is the lifeblood of the vehicle, after all. It keeps the engine lubricated and all parts moving smoothly. Without it, things will turn sluggish and eventually seize up. From here, you'll face some far major issues.

The standard oil interval for most new cars is 6,000 miles. However, your particular model may be different. Check the owner's manual for a manufacturer recommendation.

### Take Care of Your Tires

Like we said, the tires take a lot of damage. Show them the care they deserve, however, and you'll still be able to get plenty of life out of them. At every oil change, have your tires rebalanced and rotated. Once they hit the 40,000-mile mark, check the tread regularly to ensure everything is up to snuff.

### Don't Let Your Tires Squeak

A squeal or any other sort of high-pitched sound from your tires is bad news. Typically, however, it's just your tread wear indicator making itself known and alerting you to upcoming maintenance.





Worn brake pads are the most common issue you'll encounter. While different kinds last for different time frames, the average brake pads could last anywhere from 40,000 to 60,000 miles.

### Understand Your Dashboard Lights

Unsure what else to do to keep your car in shape? Fortunately, your car will tell you. As soon as a light ignites on the dashboard, be sure to pay attention. Ignoring these indicators can only lead to larger and more expensive problems.

## Is Your Car in Need of Repairs?

If you're looking to keep your car in great shape, then our major piece of advice would have to be: don't ignore problems. If something feels, sounds, or smells off, then odds are it is. Contact your local service center right away to diagnose and repair the problem. Doing so may just save your car another few years!