

Automotive Fluids FAQs

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Use answers to these frequently asked questions to help employees better sell the automotive category.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: Approximately 5 minutes. Use the Additional Discussion section for more time on this topic.

HOW TO USE: The lesson includes a PDF presentation you can distribute to employees or review in a company meeting.

This Trainer's Toolbox will refresh some of your employee's basic product knowledge in the automotive category. Effectively selling any category requires a combination of product knowledge and sales technique so that you engage the customer. A good way to help employees understand how to engage customers is to have them take the Basic Training Course in Selling Skills, available to NHPA Training Members. If you want to learn more about becoming an NHPA Training Member, visit nrha.org/membership or call 800-772-4424.

INTRODUCTION

Customers may want to pick up automotive maintenance supplies to save them a trip elsewhere. Here is some of the basic product knowledge you may need to have as you help them find what they need.

WHAT DO THE DIFFERENT NUMBERS, SUCH AS 10W-30, MEAN ON A QUART OF MOTOR OIL?

The numbers telling you the grade of engine oil refer to the viscosity of the oil. Viscosity refers to the thickness of the oil, or how resistant the liquid is to flow. In order to run properly, the engine needs to have a coating of oil so that all of its parts are well lubricated. This needs to happen in a range of temperatures. The numbers tell you how well the oil flows in hot and cold conditions. In an engine oil grade such as 5W-20, the W stands for winter. The number before the W tells you how well the oil performs in low temperatures. The smaller the number, the better the flow. The number after the dash indicates how well the oil will flow in hot conditions, or normal operating conditions. A higher number indicates a thicker oil when hot. Always buy the grade of oil recommended by your vehicle's manufacturer.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REGULAR OIL AND SYNTHETIC OIL?

Conventional oil is natural oil made from refined crude oil. It is standard for most vehicles. It is less expensive than other types of oils, but must be replaced often and has a lower level of protection than other oils. Full-synthetic oil, as the name implies, is manufactured in a laboratory. These products have better performance and last longer than conventional oils, meaning you won't have to change your oil as often. However, they are the most expensive type of oil. Synthetic oil blend is a hybrid of conventional and synthetic oil. It lasts longer with better performance than conventional oil, but doesn't perform as well as full-synthetic. Synthetic blend offers extra protection for an engine at an affordable price. Always check with your vehicle's manufacturer before using a synthetic oil.

WHAT TYPE OF ANTIFREEZE SHOULD I BUY?

Antifreeze is critical for your vehicle because it helps cool the engine in the summer and keeps it from freezing in the winter. Sometimes it is called coolant – both terms generally refer to the same product. Different types of antifreeze are also available. Manufacturers add colorant to antifreeze to help distinguish the different types. Common colors are green, orange, yellow and red. But don't rely on the color alone to ensure you are getting the correct product for your car; always read the label. Also check your vehicle's owner's manual to ensure you get the correct antifreeze for your vehicle.

WHAT IS THE BEST WINDSHIELD WASHER FLUID TO BUY?

There are a variety of types of windshield washer fluids available, but here are a few points to remember. Washer fluids are formulated so they won't freeze, so customers should not use straight water as a washer fluid. Washer fluids also list the average low temperature they are formulated to work in. There are several features you might want to consider when looking for washer fluid. Some formulations have bug repellent that prevents insects from sticking. Formulations with a de-icer included will help with ice and snow removal. Other formulations promote water beading on the surface, which promotes rainwater runoff and improves your vision while driving.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

Review with employees the other products you might want suggest as add-on sales for any customer purchasing automotive fluids or getting the car ready for winter. Suggestions include funnels, gas cans, window scrapers, lock de-icers and jumper cables.

FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

Make sure all employees have completed NHPA's Basic Training Course in Selling Skills. This course is available to NHPA Training Members. If you want to learn more about becoming an NHPA Training Member, visit nrha.org/membership or call 800-772-4424.