

Median age of vehicles

1991 – 4.5 years – Effective year of federal odometer Law

2006 – Trucks only – 6.9 years

2007 – 9.2 years

2007 - Trucks only – 7.3 years

2008 - 41.3 percent of vehicles were 11 years or older,

2009 – 10.2 years*

*Based on analysis of 248 million vehicles.

From AutoRemarketing online – 1-24-11:

Chevrolet pointed to data from R.L. Polk and Co. that indicates the average age of a vehicle in the U.S. at the end of October 2009 was 10.2 years.

Officials said that the average U.S. vehicle age had never before eclipsed the 10-year mark.

In another small business example — Costa Mesa, Calif.-based Sunwest Air Conditioning — recently elected to change out some of its aging fleet models. It bought two new Chevrolet Silverado HD units with service bodies during the fourth quarter.

The first was a new Silverado purchased in November, replacing a truck that had racked up 250,000 miles, which owner Mark Dalessi said goodbye to. Then in December, the second Silverado took the place of a truck that had been driven 200,000 miles.

From Autoremarketing Online 2008

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — According to research from R.L. Polk & Co., vehicles are becoming more and more durable.

Polk's most recent vehicle population report indicated that in 2007, the median age of passenger cars in operation was 9.2 years, which tied the previous year's record high.

The median age for all trucks in 2007, meanwhile, was 7.3 years, a 5.8-percent jump from 2006 when the median age was 6.9 years.

Among light trucks, the median age increased from 6.8 years to 7.1 years in 2007, an incline of 4.4 percent.

"The median age of trucks, while still lower than cars, is starting to increase more now than in the recent past as the surge of pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans purchased in the 1990s get older," explained Mark Seng, vice president of Polk's aftermarket team.

The study did note that the percentage of all cars and trucks scrapped climbed from 5.0 percent to 5.2 percent on the year. Specifically, the rate of passenger cars scrapped jumped from 4.9 percent to 5.5 percent.

However, these statistics don't necessarily mean vehicles are less durable, officials explained.

"We continue to see increasing vehicle durability across all vehicle types regardless of last year's increase in the scrappage rate for cars, light trucks and total vehicles," noted Dave Goebel, consultant for Polk's aftermarket solutions team.

In fact, Goebel pointed out, the number of vehicles 11 years or older actually increased.

Among cars, 41.3 percent of the sector's total population were 11 years or older, versus 40.9 percent the year before, Goebel stated.

Light trucks that were 11 years or older accounted for 29.5 percent of the total count, up from 29.2 percent in 2006, he added.

According to officials, Polk updates its vehicle population report each year on July 1, after a thorough analysis of more than 248 million vehicles.

For more information, visit www.polk.com.

OVDA solicited comments from experts in the industry.

Comment 1, from Tom Hudson of Hudson Cook, LLP, one of the most respected automotive industry attorneys in the US was “I can’t figure out what sort of quagmire would result from such recordkeeping.”

Comment 2, from Tom Buiteweg, also an attorney specializing in autos, whom Tom Hudson felt was the most knowledgeable person to answer the questions, said the following: “*The only issue that occurs to me is that the permissive nature of the statements for older used cars allows the chain of successive disclosures to be broken which probably creates additional opportunities for mischief. The dealer might be worried about being forced by market conditions to give an odometer statement in circumstances where prior transfers were made without a certification. But they would just have (to) provide a “mileage unknown” disclosure and it is hard to see how that is much different than providing no statement at all.*” So his idea is there is nothing wrong with it, and if the dealer wants to farther to protect himself, provide the ‘mileage unknown’ disclosure which is already available to dealers anyway.

Comment 3, from Tony Bartolome, Florida Department of Transportation, and member of the National Odometer and Title Fraud Enforcement Association: *I do not see a legal quagmire. We (Florida) record any odometer reading given regardless of the age of the vehicle. Consumers who own older vehicles (50s—80s) want the mileage on record in order to validate the actual (original mileage) of their vehicles. Consumers need protection regardless of the age of the vehicle, those consumers that cannot afford a newer vehicle (9 years old less) need to be protected against odometer fraud just as much as the others. I believe that they need to be protected even more, since they do not have the funds to purchase something newer.*

Comment 4, from federal government Office of Odometer Fraud Investigation, David Sparks, NHTSA. Provided NHTSA statements in 1988 Federal Register Notice.

“NHTSA notes that the odometer reading is not used as a guide to the value of certain vehicles. For example, maintenance records have traditionally been relied upon as the principal guide to the condition of trucks and buses. Antique vehicles are primarily valued because of factors such as rarity and age rather mileage.

.....We proposed to exempt a transferor of a vehicle that is twenty-five years old or older from the requirements of issuing a disclosure statement.....

Commenters suggested ten years old or older. This suggestion is based on studies done in Wisconsin and Iowa which indicate that the incidence of odometer tampering on vehicles over ten model years old is disproportionately small as compared to the vehicle population represented by that age group. For vehicles over 10 years old, the value is mostly determined by the overall condition and appearance, not primarily mileage.

Accordingly, the final rule has been changed to exempt a transferor of a vehicle that is ten years old and older.”