

HARMFUL MOTOR OILS PROMPT INVESTIGATIONS AND CONSUMER WARNINGS

A rash of obsolete and contaminated motor oils have recently been popping up for sale at gas stations and convenience stores around the country, prompting state regulators and the Petroleum Quality Institute of America (PQIA) to investigate, warn consumers and sometimes pull products from shelves. Due to stringent quality control measures, AMSOIL Dealers and customers enjoy the peace-of-mind of knowing they receive top-quality AMSOIL products with every purchase.

“Kane in Your Corner” Reveals Bad Motor Oils in New Jersey

News 12 in New Jersey recently broadcast a three-part “Kane in Your Corner” investigation that found obsolete and contaminated motor oils for sale at gas stations and convenience stores across the state. Because state authorities have not yet stepped in, the onus is on consumers to avoid these harmful products.

“The probability of getting some of this bad stuff is pretty high here in New Jersey,” says PQIA President Tom Glenn.

As part of the investigation, News 12 purchased four motor oil brands (MaxiGuard, Black Knight, U.S. Economy and US Spirit) readily available in New Jersey and had them tested at an independent lab. The results indicated that all four were unsuitable for use in modern vehicles.

MaxiGuard Super Premium

While the MaxiGuard label indicated it’s “a superior all weather motor oil,” it also indicated it’s an API SA motor oil, meaning it contains no additives and is unsuitable for vehicles manufactured after 1930. In addition to carrying a long-obsolete specification, lab tests indicated it did not meet the viscosity standards on the label and had significant levels of abrasive contaminants, including silicon levels more than 400 times higher than normal.

As part of the investigative piece, longtime New Jersey mechanic Kenny Wetzel noted that the MaxiGuard oil looked used right out of the bottle due to its black, cloudy appearance. “That looks like what we take out of a car when we change the oil,” he said.

Black Knight

Black Knight Motor Oil was labeled as an API SB motor oil, meaning it contains only a minimal level

of additives and is unsuitable for vehicles manufactured after 1951. Lab tests also indicated it was contaminated with significantly higher-than-normal levels of silicon. Its viscosity presented a mystery. Labeled “10-30,” its viscosity tested significantly lower than 10W-30.

U.S. Economy

U.S. Economy Motor Oil did not carry an API specification, but test results showed it had silicon levels 10 times higher than typically found in new motor oil. Like Black Knight, its label also indicated a viscosity grade without a “W.” Labeled “5-30,” the label explained it means the viscosity can be anywhere between 5 and 30.

US Spirit

Not only did test results indicate US Spirit is unsafe for modern vehicles, the small print on the back label indicated it is “not suitable for use in most gasoline-powered automotive engines built after 1930” and “use in modern engines may cause unsatisfactory engine performance or equipment harm.” Labeled as an API SA motor oil and indicating “it contains no additive,” lab tests revealed it is full of additives, but not the right kind for today’s vehicles.

North Carolina and Michigan Authorities Remove Harmful Oils from Store Shelves

State authorities in Michigan and North Carolina have taken action to remove harmful motor oils from store shelves.

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) has launched several investigations into harmful and obsolete motor oils, the latest coming against the Everclear brand. Everclear motor oils failed to meet viscosity claims and were not labeled in accordance with industry standards. The action extended to Everclear brand transmission fluids.

“The results for both the oil and

automatic transmission fluid showed that additives were either absent or not at the correct levels,” said NCDA&CS Standards Division Director Stephen Benjamin. “This issue, along with the presence of wear metals, indicates these products are likely recycled in origin. Any of these results would put the products out of specification and cause them to be pulled from shelves.”

Last fall, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development removed a number of motor oils from store shelves, including City Star and Bullseye, due to their failures to meet the viscosity grades labeled on the packages.

API Reveals Nearly 20 Percent of Bulk Oils Fail Performance Standards

The problems aren’t just limited to smaller oil distributors. Bulk motor oil testing performed by the American Petroleum Institute (API) indicates many motorists may be receiving substandard motor oil when they drop their vehicles off for an oil change. According to the API, it purchased and tested more than 1,000 samples from bulk motor oil tanks throughout North America over the past five years, and nearly 20 percent failed API performance standards.

PQIA Issues Advisory for Valvoline NextGen 5W-20 Motor Oil

In January, PQIA issued an advisory for Valvoline NextGen 5W-20 Motor Oil. After twice testing a sample of the oil acquired at a retail store in New Jersey, PQIA determined it did not meet volatility requirements set by the API and the International Lubricants Standardization and Approval Committee (ILSAC). While the sample passed viscosity and elemental requirements for the API SN and ILSAC GF-5 specifications, its weight losses of 18.4 and 18.3 percent in the NOACK Volatility Test (ASTM D5800) are about 22 percent higher than the 15 percent maximum required for the specifications. ■