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**CarMD Releases its 2016 CarMD® Vehicle Health Index™
of Car Repair Data and Trends, Including a Decade of U.S. Car Repair Costs**

Reveals Top Check Engine Repairs by Vehicle Age, Region

IRVINE, Calif. (Apr. 19, 2016) – CarMD, a leading provider of automotive diagnostic information, today released its **2016 CarMD® Vehicle Health Index™** report on common check engine-related car repairs, associated costs and annual trends for model year 1996 to current vehicles. The average cost to repair a check engine light problem on a car in the U.S. in 2015 was \$387, which is 8 percent less than the 10-year high of \$422 in 2006. The five most common problems that trigger the check engine light are a faulty oxygen sensor, catalytic converter, ignition coils and spark plugs combined, loose or damaged fuel cap and thermostat. They range in cost from \$15 to replace a gas cap to \$1,100 for a catalytic converter. Car repairs and associated costs can be affected by region, maintenance decisions and vehicle age. This year's Index found that drivers in the Northeast saw the largest drop in average repair costs, which were down 6.5 percent in 2015. It also found that the average check engine light repair on a 10-year-old vehicle costs \$400 versus \$200 on average for newer vehicle repairs typically under warranty.

“One of the best ways to minimize cost of ownership and help reduce unforeseen car repairs is to follow a regular maintenance program and take care of small problems as soon as you’re aware of them particularly as vehicles age,” said David Rich, CarMD’s technical director. “This CarMD Vehicle Health Index reminds drivers to address check engine light warnings early to help reduce the likelihood of additional repairs down the road, maximize fuel economy and help make sure your car isn’t harming the environment.” Rich notes that, if ignored, a simple spark plug failure can snowball from a \$50 part into a \$400 repair that entails spark plug and ignition coil replacement, or worse.

The 2016 CarMD Vehicle Health Index analyzed 1,019,904 repairs reported to and validated by CarMD’s network from Jan. 1, 2015 to Dec. 31, 2015. The full Index, including the 25 most common check engine-related repairs, a 10-year history of U.S. car repair costs, list of most common repairs by region, 10 least expensive and 10 most expensive repairs is available at <https://www.carmd.com/wp/vehicle-health-index-introduction/2016-carmd-vehicle-health-index/>.

According to CarMD, the following are the 10 most common check engine light-related car repairs and associated average repair costs. If left unrepaired, each of these problems will negatively impact fuel economy and harm the environment:

1. Replace oxygen sensor – \$249
2. Replace catalytic converter – \$1,153
3. Replace ignition coil(s) and spark plug(s) – \$390
4. Tighten or replace fuel cap – \$15
5. Replace thermostat – \$210
6. Replace ignition coil(s) – \$236
7. Replace mass air flow sensor – \$382
8. Replace spark plug wire(s) and spark plug(s) – \$331
9. Replace evaporative emissions (EVAP) purge control valve – \$168
10. Replace evaporate emissions (EVAP) purge solenoid – \$184

(more)

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The following are highlights from this year’s report:

- Type of car repairs and associated costs vary by region.
 - o The most common repair on vehicles in the West and South was “replace catalytic converter.” In the Midwest and Northeast, oxygen sensors were the most common check engine light repair.
 - o Vehicle owners in the Northeast saw the largest drop in average repair costs, which were down 6.5 percent from \$418 in 2014 to \$391 in 2015 due in part to the mild El Niño weather pattern. In 2015, drivers in the West paid the most at \$403 on average for check engine light repairs, while drivers in the Midwest paid the least at \$364.

- Vehicle age affects the type, cost and percentage of check engine light repair incidents.
 - o The average cost to repair a 20-year old model year 1996 vehicle is \$397, while a newer 2016 vehicle is \$205 on average to repair, which can be useful to know when budgeting for a pre-owned vehicle.
 - o The most common reason the check engine light comes on in a brand new model year 2016 vehicle is due to a minor loose gas cap problem, accounting for 46 percent of check engine incidents on new vehicles last year. Conversely, the most common repair on a 2006 vehicle is “replace catalytic converter,” which is considered a costly and often catastrophic repair. It accounted for 10 percent of model year 2006 repairs.

- New to the list of 10 most common car repairs this year are “replace evaporative emissions (EVAP) purge control valve” and “replace EVAP purge solenoid.” These are both important parts designed to help make sure your car is not emitting too many pollutants. When they are not working properly they will cause your car’s check engine light to turn on and keep you from passing an emissions test.

[Click here](#) to view the complete 2016 CarMD® Vehicle Health Index™ report.

About CarMD

Based in Irvine, Calif., CarMD is a leading provider of automotive diagnostic information, products and services that leverage and empower the capabilities of the on-board diagnostics (OBD2) port. CarMD’s network of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-certified technicians has built the largest, most up-to-date database of OBD2-related expert repairs and associated costs from which CarMD draws its Vehicle Health Index™. This Index is released each April in conjunction with National Car Care Awareness Month to provide vehicle owners and the industry with a comprehensive and independent report on vehicle repair trends. This 2016 Index statistically analyzes more than 1 million repairs. For information on CarMD’s products and third-party software service solutions, visit www.carmd.com.

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