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Biodiesel and the Diesel Car Engine

Can you use biodiesel in a diesel car engine? The answer is yes. In fact many owners of cars with diesel engines have been using biodiesel to naturally lubricate their car parts and make them run smoother. Biodiesel is safer and causes less wear and tear than other types of lubricants such as kerosene.

The confusion comes when people mistake the diesel car engine with an SVO engine. An SVO engine is a diesel engine that has been outfitted with an interior heating unit that allows straight vegetable oil to be poured in the gas tank and then converted into biodiesel. These types of cars are often referred to as 'grease cars.'

Usually the manufacturer of a diesel car will specify what type of biodiesel is best used in the engine. Most recommend using a biodiesel blend and not 'neat' biodiesel. Almost all diesel car manufacturers don't recommend putting a blend of biodiesel fuel and petroleum diesel fuel that is higher than 20% biodiesel in an engine (known as B20.) However this is not true in all cases. Other diesel car manufacturers would discourage using a diesel and biodiesel fuel blend that is more than 2%. You should look specifically at your owners manual for information about how high of a percentage of biodiesel fuel can be mixed with petroleum to run your car.

Whether or not you can use biodiesel in your car engine may also depend on how old the diesel car model is. Depending on the manufacturer, some older diesel cars such as Volkswagen run really efficiently on biodiesel blends. Older vehicles manufactured by Caterpillar do not and if you want to use a biodiesel blend it works better in their newer model engines.

It is easy to convert your diesel car engine to a SVO (straight vegetable oil) engine. Although expensive, these kits can be installed by yourself or a professional mechanic in a couple of hours. Think of this type of grease car kit as being a portable processor that creates biodiesel fuel in your car. The only drawback is that what you thought you might save by using pure vegetable oil as fuel in your diesel car is defrayed by the cost of the unit. A good SVO system usually sells for around \$1200. This may seem expensive but if you consider how high gas prices might be in the future it might be worthwhile to invest in this conversion.