

THE NEW DEXOS OIL – WHEN & WHERE WILL YOU USE IT?

GM's new Global Engine Oil Standard for gasoline engines is "**dexos1**". It will be factory for all GM vehicles starting with the 2011 model introduction. It replaces current GM oil service ratings on a global basis and will therefore become the recommended oil for most GM vehicles in North America.

Oil companies are already trying to limit interest in this higher quality oil standard. It may be a coincidence but oil sales reps appear to be aggressively soliciting long term contracts with shops before ILSAC GF-5 and **dexos1** are introduced. It's clear that most oil companies prefer that you use the lower standard ILSAC GF-5 products in EVERY car. In my opinion, these long term contracts are designed to discourage any shift to the higher quality (and less desirable for the oil company) **dexos1** approval.

Oil companies have a significant history of encouraging shop owners, technicians and consumers to ignore OEM proprietary oil service rating in favor of the less stringent American Petroleum Institute (API) and International Lubricant Standards and Approval Committee (ILSAC) service ratings. Most oil companies will make a **dexos1** approved product. But, it will be more convenient and they believe more profitable for them to sell the cheaper ILSAC approved products. Some niche marketers will continue to sell products that are not approved by anyone (and promote them as premium products).

This is an ideal time to avoid any long term oil purchase contracts! Dexos, API/ILSAC and ACEA are all introducing new oil service ratings before the end of this year. Other existing oil service ratings like VW 504/507 will also start to have a much bigger impact on independent shops during the same time period. It is essential that shop owners retain the freedom to rapidly change oil purchasing strategies and vendors during this period of transition.

Of all the upcoming changes, GM **dexos1** will, in my opinion, be the most important for independent shop owners. It will replace both GM 6094M and GM 4718M. But, its positive impact should go far beyond GM cars and the shops that service those GM cars.

GM **dexos1** will solve the following problems that are poised to create huge difficulties for all shop owners.

- **The term "Synthetic" is meaningless in North America.** - Shop owners and consumers alike assume that this term indicates superior quality. But, it is increasingly used as nothing more than a ploy to lure un-educated buyers into products that inflate oil company profits without a corresponding benefit to the consumer. This could result in a compromised reputation and liability for the shop owner. The GM **dexos1** approval will offer assurance of the type of quality that is expected of a "synthetic" product. Informed shop owners will ignore the term "synthetic" and look for **dexos1** approval instead.

- **Consumers and shop owners do not recognize a difference between low HTHS and high HTHS oil products.** - The desire for “better” oil products is driving consumers and shop owners to inadvertently select high HTHS oil products for low HTHS applications. The oil companies desire to offer ILSAC approved products of perceived higher quality has resulted in low HTHS “synthetic” products being used in high HTHS applications. This has already resulted many cases of serious engine damage and shop liability. GM **dexos1** and **dexos2** approvals should help identify the difference between high HTHS and low HTHS products.
- **Oil requirements are often compromised for the North American Market.** - Volvo, Jaguar and Land Rover all reduce their oil service rating requirements for vehicles marketed in North America. The availability of cost effective ACEA A1/B1 approved oil products is extremely limited in North America. GM **dexos1** promises to be very cost effective and surpass ACEA A1/B1 and similar low HTHS requirements. It should be ideal for these European import low HTHS applications as well as GM applications. It will also serve as the most sensible upgrade for other American and Asian applications.
- **Consumers desire longer drain intervals and fuel efficiency.** - Long drain intervals are hard to achieve with XW-20 and XW-20 is still not appropriate for many cars. GM **dexos1** approval appears to assure the best combination of fuel efficiency and extended drain potential in a low HTHS XW-30 or XW-20 oil product.

The new GM **dexos** approvals will help solve a lot of problems for informed shop owners. And, they will bring attention to a serious developing problem that many shop owners aren't currently aware of. That is the increasingly common engine damage caused by using low HTHS SAE 5W-30 oil products in high HTHS SAE 5W-30 applications. In fact, **dexos1** should draw attention to all modern oil service ratings (ACEA, Proprietary, HTHS, etc).

To take advantage of the opportunities that **dexos1** represents, shop owners will need to retain the flexibility to adjust their oil purchasing patterns. When oil reps call on you, the first thing you should do is ask: “do you have a **dexos1** approved product?” Until they can answer yes to that question, any discussion of oil purchase contracts is premature!

Kevin S. McCartney is an industry leader in automotive cooling and lubrication training programs and educational materials. He has also worked in the research and development of alternative fuels, emission inspection programs and hybrid electric vehicles. He can be contacted at 209-873-1155 or crashh@prodigy.net.