

# Saab adds warranty for sludge

By [Harry Stoffer](#)

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Saab Automobile AB is joining the ranks of automakers that provide extended warranties on engines prone to oil sludge buildup and possible failure.

In the United States, letters announcing the warranty will go this month to owners of 132,000 vehicles, says Tom Beaman, spokesman for Saab Cars USA Inc.

The number of Saab vehicles affected worldwide is 430,000, he says.

Saab is extending its engine warranty to eight years. A mileage limitation hasn't been determined. The warranty was for four years or 50,000 miles.

Because the Saab warranty follows the car, it will apply to used vehicles. But owners must have records showing they have performed proper maintenance, Beaman says.

Toyota, Volkswagen and Audi have approved similar warranties for some vehicles.

Clarence Ditlow, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety, says the Chrysler group remains a holdout against extended warranties that cover sludge buildup.

Ditlow says his Washington, D.C., consumer group has received hundreds of complaints about sludge in 2.7-liter V-6s in Chrysler group vehicles. Most of the engines are in 1998-2002 Dodge and Chrysler cars, he says.

The Chrysler group believes sludge in any engine is a result of infrequent oil changes, spokesman Sam Locricchio says.

Sludge is thickened, contaminated oil. When it forms, engine parts are less likely to be lubricated properly.

Saab calls its extended warranty a special policy. The warranty covers these four-cylinder engines:

- The 2.3-liter in 1998-2003 Saab 9-5s and in 1999 Saab 9-3 Viggens.
- The 2.0-liter in 2000-02 Saab 9-3 three-doors and five-doors and in 2000-03 Saab 9-3 convertibles.

Beaman says Saab believes only a few cars in these groups will develop a sludge problem.