

Drive Axle Boot Inspection Time



Ralph Seekins

On many vehicles today the driving axles have joints that allow the drive shaft to transmit power to the wheel through what are called constant velocity (CV) joints. CV joints – one on each end of the drive shaft – allowing the shaft to bend and flex while the wheels are turning or bouncing and still push the vehicle down the road. They are mainly used on front wheel drive and all wheel drive vehicles. However, some rear wheel drive vehicles with independent rear suspensions are also equipped with CV joints.

There is a rubber cover that protects the lubricated CV joint – commonly called the CV boot. If that boot cracks or tears, the nasty black grease that lubricates the joint will leak out and foreign material will begin

to get into the working mechanism of the CV joint. When that happens, the joint will start getting noisy and then fail in very short order.

CV boot rubber degrades over time and tends to be more susceptible to cracking or tearing in the extreme cold weather we experience here in Interior Alaska. That means we should be more diligent in checking our vehicle's CV boots up here during the winter months than one would need to be in the lower 48 states.

Replacing a CV joint can cost a lot of money. Replacing a boot is comparatively inexpensive.

If you are already hearing a clicking noise in your front wheel drive or all wheel drive vehicle when accelerating around corners, you may be too late to get away with a CV boot replacement. Your vehicle may already need a new CV joint equipped axle replacement. Yes, the replacement comes as an axle assembly with the required joints already attached to each end.

So, if you are one of the many drivers out there with vehicles

with CV joint systems, it's time to inspect those CV boots. You can do it yourself if you have some way of getting underneath your car or truck to inspect the boots. It will be very evident if you have a problem. If you're not so equipped, I suggest you schedule an inspection along with what is also a good time to get a late winter oil and filter change. Your vehicle manufacturer's local dealer is well equipped to help you. Some, like our own QuickLane Tire and Auto Center will perform a quick inspection at no cost with no obligation.

Manufacturers have continued to provide better and more durable CV joints. However, while CV boots can fail during warm months as well, it's not worth betting that those on your vehicle have come through the winter we just experienced with no problem whatsoever.

Ralph Seekins has more than 42 years' experience in the automotive industry. He started as a mechanic, worked in sales, and for the past 35 years, has been the owner of Seekins Ford Lincoln.