

Ethanol-Blended Gasoline and Our Camaros

Part 1

Jack Dunbar

We've talked about this in the past, but it's worth repeating. Fuel is key to the performance of your Camaro, old or new.

There has been much discussion on the use of modern gasoline in our older cars, and the possible problems that can arise from the use of it. Newer Camaros are ethanol-friendly, and won't face fuel component deterioration problems like our older Camaros, but GM still wants us to use only recommended fuel brands. See your Camaro's manual for more info.

Ethanol can damage fuel tanks, older rubber components, such as diaphragms, seals, hoses, gaskets, and possibly even some original carburetor internals, especially if these components were manufactured prior to the emergence of ethanol gasoline. Modern carburetors, rebuild kits, fuel hoses, and fuel system components are manufactured to be ethanol-friendly.

The problems with ethanol-based gasoline doesn't end there. The fuel quality quickly deteriorates, so for our Camaros that spend most of their time sitting in the garage, that can be a problem. Try running your lawnmower or weedwhacker on old gas, and they'll either be down on power, hard to start, or both. Older Camaros using original ignition systems may not run quite as smoothly if the fuel in your tank ages beyond three months, due to the lack of ignition firepower. The older the fuel, the worse it gets. New Camaros have stout ignitions, and don't have that issue. It may not be a tune-up that your older Camaro needs, just fresh gas.

It is best to start off with a high-quality premium fuel. Top-Tier fuels are recommended by GM for our modern Camaros, and will also work best with our older Camaros, as they have the proper blend of detergents and additives to keep your engine internals clean. See: www.toptiergas.com/ for participating brands and more information. Try to stay away from discount brands, as they may not contain the proper additives.

If your Camaro isn't a daily driver, and your car tends to sit for long periods of time, such as winter storage, consider using a fuel additive. Quality additives are readily available at any auto parts store. Sta-Bil 360 is a must for protecting your fuel tank and fuel quality. Lucas, Star-Tron, and others also sell quality products that help prevent ethanol fuel degradation, but none can make your fuel last indefinitely.

The best way to prevent fuel degradation is to drive your Camaro often, and I'm all for that!