

3 Series 1984-1992 (E30, Including M)

Getting EDGEucated:

The "75k Mile List"

The E30 3-Series (1984-1992, including M)
Edition

After

years of working on BMW's, we have begun to see common problems and maintenance concerns that need to be addressed on nearly every middle-aged BMW. E30 3-series cars, like all BMWs, they have certain areas that need to be inspected regularly, and prospective owners should always have a pre-purchase inspection done to verify the condition of these items.

In this list, you will find items that should have been replaced or at least inspected by 75k-100k miles. Some are model specific, and will be noted as such.

If you suspect you may have some of these issues, or just want us to take a look for your peace of mind, call us at 925.479.0797 to schedule an appointment!

Areas of Concern:

Lower Control Arm Bushing Failure

Common symptoms for torn or cracked lower control arm bushings are undesired front toe changes during cornering, vague and rubbery feel in the steering, and vibration experienced while braking at freeway speeds. Non-M bushings are commonly replaced with M3 bushings to increase performance with little to no change in comfort.

Tie Rod Wear

Symptoms include: steering shimmy, clunking during steering input and inability to hold proper alignment. If any of the ball joint boots is cracked (you'll see grease coming out) then expect that component to need replacement. All components should also be checked for excessive play, and replaced if out of BMW spec.

Worn or Blown Shocks and Struts

Factory BMW shocks work great for about 30k. By 60k they are completely shot. Most folks who have been driving their cars since new hardly notice the deterioration as it is gradual. Symptoms include: Diving under braking and acceleration, excessive lean and suspension compression during cornering. Bouncy and uncomfortable ride. Shocks and struts may visibly leak shock oil. EDGE generally recommends replacing the factory units with quality shocks from Koni whenever possible. When replacing shocks and struts, keep in mind it is a great time to install lowering springs or freshen up other areas of the suspension. You will be amazed at the difference a good set of shocks can make in both comfort and performance!

Worn or Failed Swaybar Endlinks

Worn swaybar endlinks can compromise handling. A worn swaybar can sound like a metallic clicking noise. There is no critical danger in a failed swaybar endlink, but the handling of the car is severely compromised.

Torn Rear Shock Mounts

Torn or destroyed rear shock mounts will produce a very pronounced clunk during any sort of suspension movement, and could possibly just tear right through the trunk carpeting into the passenger cabin. Sloppy and erratic handling and excessive rear suspension play are common symptoms of a RSM failure.

Torn Subframe and Subframe Bushings

Torn subframe bushings could lead to subframe failure. Common symptoms of subframe failure are erratic handling and unidentified clunks and bangs from the rear of the car. If your e30 still has stockers, you are WAYYYYYY overdue.

Torn or Cracked Transmission Mounts

Worn transmission mounts allow for an excess amount of transmission movement. Symptoms can be hard, notchy and forced shifting during cornering, excessive shifter jerk during hard acceleration and braking, and muddy shifter feel.

Stock replacements are just "OK" --we recommend that stronger aftermarket units.

Ripped or Failed Guibo

A torn guibo (Flex Disc) will result in a perceivable 'drivetrain elasticity.' Acceleration will be preceded with a loud clunk as the guibo bolts bind together.

Water Pump Failure

Water pump failure is without a doubt the easiest way to cause extensive and expensive damage to your BMW. The main symptom will be a rapidly overheating motor. What occurs is that the bearing or impeller on the stock pump, breaks, completely disabling the cooling system. If you ever see the temperature gauge on your BMW climb above the 3/4 mark,

TURN THE CAR OFF IMMEDIATELY AND

CALL A TOW TRUCK!!

We can't stress this enough. Failure to catch the overheating motor in time can result in a warped head or even more severe engine damage. We recommend changing out the waterpump in six cylinder cars every 60-80k.

Cracked Radiator Necks

BMW loves their plastic radiator tanks....Unfortunately...The plastic around the radiator necks become brittle and crack with age, often without warning (see warning above.) Radiators should be thought of as 80-100k mile wear items. Trust us, this is cheap insurance!!

Fan Clutch Failure

Most fan clutches fail between 80 and 100k miles. They provide the primary cooling for your car, and are easy for us to diagnose. If the car is hot (just drove it for a while) and you turn off the engine, you should feel a

decent amount of resistance when trying to turn the fan clutch. If not, its toast.

Accessory Belt and Tensioner Failure

Worn tensioners and idler pulleys will sound like a squealing noise from the engine bay. Belts should be inspected for cracks regularly. If a belt happens to snap, the cooling system will fail as the water pump will cease to operate. Power steering and the alternator will also fail to work. Again, pull over and shut the car off immediately should you suspect a belt failure or see the temperature gauge rise past the 3/4 mark

Leaky Valve Cover Gasket

Prevalent on all BMWs, a burning oil smell could indicate a leaky valve cover gasket. For E30's this is generally just messy. On S14's the oil seals on the spark plug holes will also fail and leak oil, potentially causing misfire conditions.

O2 Sensor Failure

Poor mileage, poor idle and flat spots in the power curve could be caused by bad O2 sensors. Even if your car isn't throwing a check engine light, they may not be performing optimally. BMW recommends replacing the O2 sensors every 100k miles. Extended high-RPM running/racing and high-performance chips may shorten the replacement cycle.