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This is a special issue of Motorconsult Update dealing exclusively with the potential problems of using B30 bio-diesel fuel. Using this fuel may cause the new vehicle warranty to be invalidated with a direct cost to the customer if repairs are subsequently required.



MOTORCONSULT WARNING ON B30 BIO-DIESEL

Motorconsult is warning that using the wrong fuel in your vehicle could invalidate the manufacturer's warranty. The warning came as Morrisons, the supermarket chain, launched a new fuel containing 30% bio-diesel derived from fatty acid methyl esters (FAME). Normal diesel contains up to five per cent bio-diesel to the BS EN590/2004 standard. However, it seems there is currently no BS standard for B30 fuel.

The new fuel is available on an increasing number of Morrisons' forecourts across the UK where it is dispensed from the same pump stand as conventional diesel and petrol. As of 8 November there were 111 Morrisons stores across the UK where the new fuel was available.

"While you may think that fuelling your vehicle with this apparently 'greener' fuel may appear to be good for the environment," says Alan Croft, chairman of Motorconsult, "It can be anything but for your warranty. A majority of manufacturers have already said to us that using this fuel is not sanctioned for their vehicles and would cause the warranty to be invalidated. While it may be very tempting to use this seemingly greener fuel, especially as it costs around the same price as conventional diesel, we are saying to all of our clients, please check with us or the manufacturer before allowing any of your drivers to use it."

Manufacturers which have said that B30 is definitely NOT approved include, Alfa Romeo, Audi, BMW, Chrysler, Fiat, Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Jaguar, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Renault, Seat, Skoda, Toyota, Volvo and Volkswagen. Vauxhall has approved it for some Vivaro and Movano



The orange handled B30 nozzle situated next to a conventional diesel nozzle on a Morrisons forecourt

LCVs but with conditions attached, including replacement of the fuel filter at 24,000 miles and signing a 'conditions of use' document as well as providing VIN numbers for the vehicles intended to use the fuel.

Peugeot will sanction use of the fuel but says that a special dispensation is required to ensure that fuel quality standards are respected. Citroën too, will sanction the fuel but also applies special restrictions. The main diesel fuel injection equipment suppliers say that they would not sanction the use of more than five per cent bio-diesel in their units until such time as a BSI or ISO standard was agreed for the fuel.

A statement from Morrisons says that there are warning notices on the B30 pumps on their forecourts which advise customers to check with the vehicle manufacturer that the engine is compatible with the fuel before filling up. The pump handles are orange but are situated next to the black conventional

diesel pump. It would be possible to miss or ignore the notice and fill up with B30 believing that, since it is 'green', it would not cause any problems.

While the engine may run on B30, should a subsequent failure occur and the manufacturer is one that has not specifically approved the use of the fuel, then the warranty almost certainly would be invalidated. The potential bill for anyone who has to, say, replace an engine following invalidation of the warranty by using this fuel, could run to several thousand pounds.

Alan Croft repeats the Motorconsult client warning. "Using this fuel in a wide range of manufacturers' vehicles could lead to warranty problems, and expensive ones at that. Our advice is, that unless you specifically know that the manufacturer has approved the use of this fuel and that you have met all of his conditions, then don't use it. It could be a very expensive lesson."