TECHNICAL BULLETIN
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PENRITE OIL RATINGS

There has been much discussion on oils, oil ratings, good quality oils and inferior oils.

As we all know, the performance of oils is determined by the API, ACEA or ILSAC ratings as well as various specifications that may be required by the OEMs. There are many certification procedures, the costs of which can run into millions of dollars depending on how many products are licensed.

What is a license?

Some companies will test individual engine oils against the full specifications of the API (and then read-across results to other viscosity grades) and they may then choose to obtain a licence to use the "API Donut" (see example) as an additional marketing tool.

In addition, if the engine oil meets xW-20 or xW-30, (i.e. a fuel efficient ILSAC oil) it may also display the API/ILSAC Starburst. This starburst cannot be applied to ANY viscosity grade other than those mentioned prior. Once again, the choice to use this starburst is a marketing rather than technical one.

Such license procedures apply not only to engine oils but also to transmission and gear oils where products such as our ATF DX-VI and ATF Synthetic are licensed General Motors DEXRON®-VI and MERCON®-V products respectively.

However oils can meet or exceed these standards without being individually tested.

ACEA (the European equivalent to API) do not have a symbol or "stamp of approval" for their specifications even though their standards and testing are more rigorous than the API (specifications). However this "lack of a symbol" does not diminish the requirement that any oil claiming ACEA standards must be using the correct formulation with the data to support those claims. This is also true of oils claiming to meet API standards.

Given the divergence of testing and approval procedures, most major oil companies do not see the benefit of testing every individual product in order to promote the API donut. For a company such as Penrite who have a vast range of products, this would be a costly and pointless marketing exercise. Instead, most Companies rely on "read across" data from tested formulations and input from their technology partners to ensure that their products meet or exceed the required standards for API, ACEA, ILSAC, or other specific standards.

Approving bodies such as API and ACEA randomly check lubricants claiming to meet their standards. However, Penrite and other reputable companies do not need these checks to ensure that they continually produce products that meet or exceed these standards. If a Penrite product states it meets the requirements of API SM/CF, ACEA A3/B4 ***we will stand behind those claims,*** and with the full support of our technical partners.

Even if we assume that all lubricants claiming to meet certain standards actually do so, the real test of any lubricant, is how well it does its job and for how long. An oil might meet a performance specification when it is blended but may break down much quicker than others once used in the vehicle. Quality oils will hold viscosity for longer than others (shear stability/breakdown), resist wear and produce less deposits, and control volatility and oil consumption better than others depending on the quality of the base oils and additives that are used.

The real test of a lubricant is how it performs over time in operation. Companies such as Penrite have built their name on producing quality products that meet or exceed the international standards claimed for them, and by people pulling down components and seeing for themselves how well the products have worked.

This is one of the reasons why we have such a large range of oils. We endeavour to provide the best product to exceed the specific manufacturer's requirements. As such, the old days of one engine oil and one auto fluid in the workshop are long gone and workshops (and retailers) are now required to stock a wide range of product to meet their customers' real needs. Specifications are wide and varied, and as regulations tighten and component designs advance, the need for more specialised oils (such as HPR 0, HPR Diesel 5, and the variety of transmission oils) is becoming more important.

The thing every lubricant user needs to ensure is that they use the right oil for their specific application from a reliable and trusted manufacturer.

Penrite guarantee the performance of all of our products when used in the correct applications as specified in our Recommendations Listing and Product Information Sheets.