

AOCA's New Online Technician Academy

by Emily Schmitt



In the past few years, the way we do business in the automotive oil change industry has changed. To help you stay on top of these changes, AOCA has overhauled its Technician Academy, an online certification course that covers such topics as safety, products and services, and the roles and responsibilities of the hood technician, lube technician and courtesy technician.

We talked with Lenny Saucier, director of training at Take 5 Oil Change and AOCA member, who, along with vice president of operations for Oil Changer Inc., Eric Frankenberger and training director at Super-Lube, Aimann Hafez, led the overhaul of the AOCA Technician Academy. Below, Saucier reveals some of the changes made to the Technician Academy and discusses who will benefit most from this online course.

What are some of the major updates to the AOCA Technician Academy?

The major changes we made were mostly focused on oil change products. We brought the academy up-to-date with the new products that have been introduced in recent years. We also talk about the API (American Petroleum Institute) and SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) specifications that technicians really need to know now. There have been so many changes in that area. We also talk about ILSAC (International Lubricants Standardization and Approval Committee), ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers Association) and special engine oils specifications. It's not just looking at 5W-30 anymore!

For the technicians, we mainstreamed the procedures. We made sure to include the different types of quick lubes. For example, now you have rollover bays, and the typical settings are no longer the norm. We wanted to include this so no one is excluded during the training.

Beyond those items, the new academy looks and flows better. Most importantly, the platform is much better, making it easier for us to make changes to the academy as changes arise in the industry. This is very important going forward, especially with oils, as there are going to be a lot of changes in the next couple of years. As these changes happen, AOCA needs to be there to educate technicians, quick lube owners and managers on those changes.

Who should take this class?

This course should be taken by all new hires. Also, any technician who's working in the field should be taking the course because it covers almost every aspect of their job. This course is also useful for management, if you're opening up your own store or if you're

joining the industry. It's a very good tool to help you get up-to-date. We also teach a lot of the day-to-day safety information that isn't really covered in the management course.

What can people expect from this course?

The first thing to know is that it's online. It's broken up into eight different sections, from basic lingo to safety, customer service, product knowledge and technician duties. Each section has interactive elements. You'll be clicking on things, learning and answering questions. You also have the option to take the course an hour at a time, and you can take the course from home.

Take 5 Oil Change took it and turned it into a detailed, interactive session. We would take the online sessions, then we would pass around the oil and have more discussion on these topics.

Why should technicians take this training from AOCA?

What's unique about AOCA is that it is focused on what we do on an everyday basis. This is authentic training based on what goes on in your bays.

Are there any trends or topics that quick lube owners, managers and technicians should be aware of?

I think the main topic is customer service. This should be at the forefront of all training. Once people are well educated on the procedures, the only thing that will separate you is how well you treat your customers. This will make a difference in how your shop grows.

To learn more about the online Technician Academy, or to sign up for the course, visit: www.aoca.org

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