

DOC'S BLOCKS
AUTOMOTIVE AIR CONDITIONING REPAIR

Question:

What are some of the indicators of a system needing service?

Answer:

There is a difference between preventive maintenance and needing an air conditioning service. Each spring, before the weather starts to get hot, the condenser should be washed down. Road film and other trash can insulate the condenser and that causes pressures to be higher. This will also effect the cooling. Check the fans on the radiator. A dirty fan blade doesn't pull air well. If equipped, is the fan clutch in good shape? If the AC has not been run all winter, the first time it is turned on, run the unit for at least one hour. The reason for this is if it feels like it is working and is turned off, the next time it is turned on, it may not work. Running the unit longer will help clean varnish from the seals and soften them up. A cooling system check should be made. Is the radiator cap good? Does the anti freeze need replacing? Be sure to check the belts. Check the belt tension indicator to see if the belt is worn out.

The first sign a system needs service is the unit will work well early in the morning and late at night. During the heat of the day, the unit does not produce cold air as well. This is a sign that the unit is low on refrigerant. Perhaps as much as a pound low. Another would be a general lack of cooling. When the clutch is turned on, are there any noises out of the ordinary.

If the vehicle is taken to a shop for service, do not turn the unit on before getting there to see if the AC game back overnight. This will make it harder to find leaks. Oil travels with the refrigerant and will most likely seal up leaks temporally.