

DOC'S BLOCKS
AUTOMOTIVE AIR CONDITIONING REPAIR

Question:

How Many ways are there to check for leaks?

Answer:

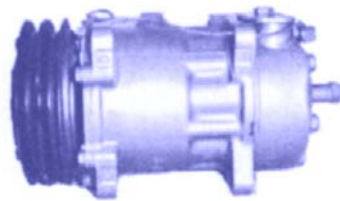
Checking for leaks is always a problem. A system needing service always has a leak. The problem is how long did it take to leak down. It could be a year, six months or a week. Time helps to determine the size of the leak and even where the leak is. This is information that no one has.

Oil, in the system, travels with the refrigerant so if a leak is to be found, it is important that the unit is not operated before a leak check is made. The worst leak can seal itself with oil for a period of time, making it impossible to find.

Dyes, used in the system to locate leaks, have been around long enough that most all systems have it in it.

All the tools must be used to locate leaks. The dye that is detected with a black light, visual inspection, pulling, twisting, and bending hoses and there connections, soapy water, and a electronic leak detector. One of these techniques will generally find the leak.

Oily hoses are a good indication that it is leaking. There will be no oil on anything else but the hose. Try to bend the hoses and see if they crack and pop when bent. That means the inside barrier has become brittle. This could cause a compressor to fail if the hose is a suction hose.



Pressure Relief Valve

Systems have blow off valves that are set to release pressure around 440 lb. If the fans on the radiator don't function, dirt on or trash in front of the condenser stops airflow, this valve could blow.

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Anything that could cause the pressure to rise in the system could cause the valve to blow. Most of these valves are located in the compressor but some are in the hose manifold assembly. Some manufacturers place a piece of tape over the end of the valve. If the valve blows, it blows the tape off.