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Seven Vital Facts About Your Car's Air Conditioning System

By Steve Magill

Air conditioning, which was once a great luxury, is now a common feature on most motor vehicles.

While the servicing of modern car air conditioning systems is best left to professionals, you can get the most enjoyment from your ac system if you know a bit about how it works and what malfunctions you should be on the lookout for.

1. Odd smells coming from the air conditioning may be caused by bacterial buildups

As your car becomes older, or when the air conditioning system is used infrequently, bacteria, micro-organisms, mold and fungi may start growing, just behind the dash panel on the evaporator causing some very unpleasant odors. Some even claim this can result in headaches and flu like symptom sometimes referred to as "sick car syndrome."

This problem can be solved by using an anti-bacterial treatment that destroys the bacteria growth and leaves your car smelling fresh again.

2. If you car does not feel cold enough, then you may need to recharge your system

If you feel that your car doesn't feel as cold as your friend's car, then your system may need servicing. The air conditioning system in your vehicle is not usually covered by most manufacturers servicing schedules and the refrigerant gas that is used to operate the system depletes over time. On average most vehicles lose up to 15% per annum. This leakage can be caused when the system is not used during the winter months. Thus allowing the small "O" ring seals to dry out resulting in a gradual deterioration in system performance. If this continues, eventually the system will not be able to operate at all.

Most problems of this type can be put right fairly easily by a leak check of your system followed by a complete refill of your air conditioning refrigerant, this is sometimes referred to as a re-gas.

3. Running your air conditioning year round will help maintain the system

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If you run the air conditioning in the winter it will help to keep the system well lubricated and leak tight. This is because the refrigerant actually carries the oil that lubricates the system and most importantly the compressor. It also keeps the seals and hoses moist, thus preventing them from drying out and cracking which can lead to leaks.

4. Strange noises coming from the air conditioning should be attended to immediately

If your air-con system suddenly starts making noises you have not heard before it is very advisable to have a qualified vehicle air conditioning specialist to have a look at it. Some noises could be early symptoms of a compressor failure (the compressor is the air conditioning pump). The compressor is usually the most expensive part on the system ranging from approximately £230 to £600+ and if the bearings in your compressor break down or if the compressor seizes up it also means that other components can become contaminated with metal particles. A flush of the system would then be needed as well as replacement of the compressor, the receiver/drier and the expansion valve – quite a

hefty bill!

5. Don't worry about a pool of water forming under your car after using the A/C

If you see a puddle of water on the ground, usually under the passenger area don't be alarmed. This is a normal feature of the system as it is only water dripping from the air conditioning evaporator. The evaporator has a drain tube fitted to allow the condensation from the evaporator to drain away from the vehicle.

6. Excessive moisture inside the car can be fixed easily

Sometimes the drain tube from the evaporator may become blocked or detached allowing the condensation to build up inside your evaporator. If this occurs water will just build up inside your car to a point where there are damp carpets or misting / high humidity type problems. These problems can be solved with low-cost servicing.

7. Have your air conditioning serviced regularly, even if there are no visible problems

Just as the other systems of your car need servicing on a regular basis, the same is true for the air conditioning system. The compressor needs oil, or else it will seize up. The filter collects debris and moisture. If the filter becomes blocked, then the performance of the system will deteriorate and it can even quit working entirely (probably when you need it most!)

Normally the refrigerant gas in a car air conditioning system has to be recharged completely within four years from the manufacture date and thereafter every two to three years.

An annual servicing of your car's air conditioning system will guard against malfunctions in the compressor and other vital parts of the system. Regular maintenance will save you money in the long run and guarantee you comfort in the hottest months.

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Steve Magill is the managing director of LVV Services Ltd.

<http://www.lvvservices.com>

. Located in

South Wales, LVV Services specializes in Smart Repair of autos, including dent removal, car diagnostics, paint repair, alloy wheel repair and air conditioning services.

Are You Buying A Central Air Conditioning?

By Claire Sessions

So you have decided to buy central air conditioning. The best way and most important thing when buying central air conditioning equipment is to have it installed by a qualified contractor.

If you get the central air conditioner properly installed then the unit would be tightly sealed and no energy can be wasted, which saves you money. When one talks about saving money through efficient air conditioning systems the topic of SEER usually comes up. SEER or seasonal energy efficiency ratio, rates the central air conditioning unit. To keep it simple the higher the SEER the more efficient your central conditioning system is, meaning the more money you save and the more you're saving the environment.

Central air cooling systems have been running on Freon for many years, but this is apparently going to change. Freon will be replaced with Puron, which is friendlier to the environment. This change is expected to occur no later than the year 2010. Even though the systems would initially cost more, keeping the systems with Freon will cost you even more, as it would be hard to find the parts if they were to ever break down. Because the parts for the older systems would no longer be manufactured, it would be hard to get them as they will become quite rare. So in the end it will probably save you more money to get the new cooling system with Freon.

The cost is the one reason many people do not go for central cooling systems. Since it must be installed first, the cost for the system is more. But it cools your house faster and is not a big eye sore as the unit air conditioning systems. So you make the decision, if you pay a little more it can give you more benefits.

Claire Sessions is a successful freelance author that writes regularly for

<http://www.kitchen-plans-n-designs.com/>

. Her articles have also been featured on related sites such

as

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