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How to troubleshoot ac in car

A/C isn't cooling? Troubleshoot these common car air conditioning system problems It's no fun being stuck without air conditioning on a hot summer day, especially in a hot car where temperatures can quickly reach 150 degrees or more. But A/C is more than just comfort; it's a safety issue too. In fact, one of the most dangerous places for someone to be during a heat wave is inside of their car without A/C since temperatures can spike to dangerous levels. So if your vehicle's A/C is only kicking out hot air, you should take steps immediately to get the problem fixed. To help, our ASE-certified repair team here at Bryant Motors has put together a list of the most common air conditioning issues that you can troubleshoot on your own to get your air conditioner back up and running — or to at least know the problem before bringing it into our repair shop in Sedalia, MO. The six most common car A/C issues are: Leaking refrigerant Blocked/clogged condenser Broken condenser Electrical issues Faulty cooling fans Bad compressor Reason #1: Your Car is Leaking Refrigerant A refrigerant leak can occur at any point in the air conditioning process and so it's sometimes difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the leak. The most common places where leaks are found are at A/C unit hose connections. It's sometimes possible to see an oily substance accumulating around these connection, which is likely the source of the leak. You or a technician can use a sealant (specifically designed for air conditioning units) found at most auto parts stores to close the leak. Reason #2: The Condenser is Blocked The condenser of your vehicle's air conditioning unit is supposed to re-cool hot refrigerant once it has been compressed. This is done using the airflow that comes through the front of your car as you drive. If the condenser is blocked by some type of debris from the road, then it will be unable to properly cool the refrigerant and your car's system will continue to operate with overheated refrigerant. This will quickly cause the A/C unit to only expel hot air. In most vehicles, the condenser is found at the front of the car, so it should be easy to visually see if anything is blocking it. This can easily be removed from the grill of your car and the issue should be resolved. Reason #3: The Condenser is Broken If there doesn't appear to be anything blocking the condenser, it's possible that it may be broken altogether. A broken condenser can be caused by a puncture from road debris going through the grill of your car and damaging the part, or equipment failure. If you notice any noticeable punctures in the condenser upon a visual inspection, typically the only way to fix the issue is through replacement. Reason #4: Electrical Issues Electrical issues are perhaps the most difficult problem to diagnose when it comes to an A/C unit that has stopped working. First, a visual inspection of all the wiring should be done to see if any wires are broken or frayed. If any damaged wires are found, they should be mended with electrical tape or replaced altogether. If you're unable to visually locate any electrical issues, it may be time to take your vehicle to an experienced dealer for further diagnosis. Reason #5: Faulty Cooling Fans When fans aren't properly functioning, your condenser may not receive properly cooling. Over time, this can cause your car to start emitting only hot air. The best way to check if the cooling fan is broken is through a visual inspection. Cracks in the fan can be caused by debris on the road and replacement is the only true way to address this issue. Other common issues with cooling fans include blown fuses and other electrical issues. These problems may have to be addressed by a professional unless you have experience in electrical work. Reason #6: The Compressor Has Gone Bad The compressor keeps your A/C moving at all times. Without it, the refrigerant cannot circulate through the system and you'll never get any cold air. The most common reason that a compressor goes bad is due to long periods of time without use. Lack of use tends to shock the system when it finally is used again such as in the spring or summer after sitting dormant all winter long. To best combat this issue, we recommend running your A/C system on full blast for at least 15 minutes roughly once every three weeks or so, regardless of the outside temperature. This will help keep the compressor fresh and extend its overall lifespan. How Can We Help? Just because your car air conditioner has stopped cooling doesn't mean that all is lost. In fact, the fix may be a relatively inexpensive repair that can be done in just a matter of minutes. We understand that this can be an extremely frustrating thing to happen to your vehicle, so we wanted to equip you with the necessary knowledge to troubleshoot these things on your own if possible. If you're still having trouble trying to fix these issues yourself though, and you're in the Central Missouri area, then feel free to give us a call or stop by our repair shop. We'd be happy to have our experienced ASE-certified technicians take a look and get you back on the road in no time. Having the opposite problem? Learn about the 5 Reasons Why Your Car Heater is Blowing Cool Air. The compressor in an AC unit is a type of pump, and it functions in a manner that's similar to a human being's heart, according to Tech Choice Parts. However, instead of moving blood through a human body, the AC compressor moves refrigerant through the air conditioner's system. Creates Heat and PressureIt helps to understand how a compressor works when you're considering AC compressor repair for a cooling system that isn't functioning properly. While the purpose of the system is to generate chilled air, the compressor creates heat within the system. That heat puts the refrigerant under very intense pressure. The pressure generated by the heated refrigerant is what begins to push the coolant through the system.Parts of an AC Compressor SystemThe compressor system of an AC unit is made up of two main parts, the compressor itself and the unit's clutch assembly. If you're looking at AC compressor replacement, you need to know which part is bad or if both parts need to be replaced. An AC compressor has an inlet port for suction and an outlet port for discharge. The hole with the larger diameter will always be the inlet, or suction port. The inlet port sucks refrigerant into the compressor, which then compresses as it passes through the compressor unit's inner passages, bearings and valves before discharging it to the AC condenser unit.Reciprocating CompressorsThere are two types of compressors for AC units, according to Budget Home Services. The types are scroll-type and reciprocating. Reciprocating AC compressors have an internal cylinder and piston system that functions the same way as a car's motor to build external power. That external power then compresses the AC refrigerant that's flowing through the compressor. Reciprocating compressors come in three styles: open-type, hermetically sealed and semi-hermetically sealed.Scroll-Type CompressorsScroll-type compressors have two alternating scrolls with gaps between the scrolls that compress the refrigerant. Scroll-type compressors are usually more expensive than reciprocating compressors but they also compensate by operating with a higher degree of efficiency than reciprocating compressors. Most manufacturers offer both styles for their AC units.Cost of Replacing an AC CompressorThe cost of an AC compressor is around \$645 if the unit is under warranty and about \$1,200 for parts, labor and supplies if your warranty is expired, according to Budget Home Services. Air conditioners can't operate properly if the compressor is failing, and a failing compressor can even damage the remaining components of an AC unit. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET All summer long you count on your vehicle's air conditioning system to help you stay cool when the temperature rises. There's nothing quite like escaping the heat and feeling the rush of cold air coming from your car's A/C system. When your air conditioning isn't working properly, that road trip you've been looking forward to can feel like it will never end. Being in a hot car is uncomfortable for you and your passengers. To keep everyone from feeling the heat, you need your A/C running with no issues. If you experience any of the following problems, it's time to make an appointment with your trusted mechanic. You've waited all winter for warm weather, and now that air is heating up, so is the air coming from your car's air conditioning system. If the air coming from your A/C is not as cool as you remember or is downright warm, it can make for a long ride. Causes can range from a failed seal or hose causing a Freon leak to a damaged compressor, condenser or blower motor. Time is of the essence with this type of problem. Get your vehicle to your mechanic when you start experiencing the symptoms. It could mean the difference between a small and inexpensive repair and a more involved and expensive repair. You jump in your car, rev up the A/C and everything starts out as it should with a steady stream of cold air. But after a few minutes, the air turns warm. What is going on? There are many different reasons your air conditioning system could be acting this way. One cause could be air and moisture trapped in the A/C system that allows ice to form and block the expansion valve. Other causes could be a blown fuse, faulty compressor clutch or a leak. Your mechanic will be able to track down the source of the problem and get the cool air flowing again. If you're greeted by a less than powerful air flow when you turn on your air conditioning, it's not only annoying but also a sign that something is going on with your cooling system. Culprits can include a loose hose, a worn seal that has opened up leading to diminished airflow, failed ventilation fan or mold that has accumulated in the evaporator core. Take your vehicle to your mechanic for a thorough inspection during which they'll be able to diagnose and fix your A/C problem. No one wants their vehicle to smell like a locker-room. A musty, mildew odor coming from your vents can have a couple different causes. First, it can be a sign that your air conditioning system is harboring mold and mildew. The A/C evaporator naturally has moisture collecting on it and that moisture can develop mold. To dry out the evaporator, turn off the A/C and drive with the fan on high for a while. The other cause could be a dirty cabin air filter. Replace your cabin air filter to get the fresh air flowing once again. To learn more about your vehicle's cabin air filter, check out this article. Tips for maintaining your A/C Staying on top of the performance of your car's A/C system will help you know when there is a problem. Follow these tips to keep everything in top condition. Run the A/C once a week - Running the air conditioner once a week for 10 minutes will help maintain the compressor. Operate the defroster - Be sure to run the defroster for 5-10 minutes once a week to help prevent mildew and odors from developing. Use the A/C in winter - It sounds counterintuitive but using your A/C in winter removes fog from the windshield. It will also alert you to any issues that need to be taken care of before summer. A/C check - Before the summer heat sets in, have your mechanic perform a check on your A/C system to ensure that it is working properly. This can make you aware of problems before symptoms emerge. Learn more about quality auto parts, find your car part, or find a local car repair shop today. The content contained in this article is for entertainment and informational purposes only and should not be used in lieu of seeking professional advice from a certified technician or mechanic. 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