



## Radiator needs care for troublefree duty

The warmer weather can put a strain on your car's cooling system if it's not working right.

A do-it-yourself check of your engine's cooling and air conditioning systems can help you avoid a costly breakdown or a spoiled vacation trip.

Check the following:

• **Hoses** — Squeeze radiator and heater hoses for soft or brittle spots and cracks. White or rust-colored stains near hose clamps can be an indication of a loose connection or leak.

• **Belts** — Inspect fan and other drive belts for wear and tension. Belts that are worn, frayed or damaged should be replaced. Belts should give less than 1/2-inch under pressure from your thumb.

• **Radiator** — Examine the surface of your car's radiator for dents or wet spots. Also, make certain the radiator pressure cap locks firmly in place. Replace the cap if its spring seems loose or weak. Remove the radiator cap only when the engine cold.

• **Thermostat** — A sticking thermostat will cause the engine to run too hot or too cold. You will recognize this by the obvious signs of engine overheating or by little or no heat from the heater. In either case, a new thermostat is needed. When in

doubt, have your mechanic check it for you.

• **Coolant** — The antifreeze and water solution in your radiator should come up to within two or three inches of the radiator's filler neck or to the cold fill mark on the side of the radiator. If coolant is dirty or rusty, the system should be flushed and refilled.

• **Air conditioner** — Air conditioning problems are more difficult to pinpoint. However, a noticeable drop in cooling efficiency is a common sign that professional service is needed.

Items that require attention include the compressor belt drive, refrigerant level, and attaching bolts and brackets.

Be sure all the controls are moving freely.

Check the system thoroughly for leaks.

In its first year of availability — more than a quarter of a century ago — fewer than 30,000 air conditioning units were sold. The price was high and it was offered only on two of the highest priced cars.

Today, almost 90 percent of all new cars are equipped with air conditioning. While the option uses more gasoline, it increases comfort and offers relief to those suffering from dust and pollen allergies. Because it reduces driver fatigue, it is a safety factor.

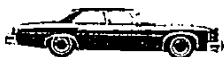
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