

TECH TIP

Heater Core Failures

Sometimes it is important to refresh our memories as to the reason why some parts fail prematurely. When a heater core fails it is very important to closely examine the defect to determine the reason for the failure.

Coolant becomes ionized shortly after it is installed. The ionized liquid then starts to “eat” away at the different metals that it comes in contact with as it runs through the system. An ionized liquid will remove one molecule of metal at a time and deposit it on another metal as it passes through the coolant system. This is the same way the battery works in a car. This old ionized coolant can cause a heater core failure in a matter of a few weeks of operation.

It is recommended to service the coolant system every 2 years. If the old leaking heater core has a “blackish” appearance at the leaks, or has several holes, the coolant system should be serviced before the new heater core is installed.

Recent advances in the coolant industry make it important for the technician to be aware of the type of coolant in the vehicle and what is being added. Color alone is no longer a way to tell what type of coolant is being used. There are currently 36 different brands of coolant available to the consumer. It is recommended that the technician should consult the OEM to determine the type of coolant. The topping off of the coolant system with the wrong coolant type **might** cause excessive corrosion. Refer to OEM coolant requirements for further guidance.