

## TECH TIP

### Foul Odors

We have received numerous calls concerning a foul musty smell coming out of the A/C vents. This smell may be worse on hot, humid days, after the vehicle has made several driving cycles. The smell may be due to a growth of a micro-biological organism. Under normal A/C operation, the A/C evaporator will build up moisture which will capture dirt, dust, and pollen molecules. When the vehicle shuts down, the condensation on the evaporator core comes up to ambient temperature and creates a perfect atmosphere for bacterial growth. To eliminate this condition, we must clean the evaporator core and case and keep moisture to a minimum.

When diagnosing this problem, first make sure that the problem is truly coming from the evaporator core. We have seen a leaky door seal or window, allow water to pool in the floorboard and create a smell in the same way the evaporator will.

If the Evaporator is the culprit, the entire core must be cleaned. Use an appropriate evaporator cleaner, and follow the manufacture's instructions to completely clean the core. This will temporarily stop or mask the smell. Many technicians will stop here and the vehicle may be back with in a few months or weeks. If the smell persists an evaporator dryer module may need to be installed. The Evaporator dryer module will cut down on foul duct smells by running the blower motor after the vehicle is shut down to dry the evaporator core. This will keep any unwanted critters from growing on the core.

Many high-end vehicles such as Cadillac and Volvo have built in after-blow features in their A/C electronics. The after-blow feature will cycle the blower motor after the vehicle is shut down. This feature is often disabled from the factory, but can be activated by the on board diagnostics or sometimes a scan tool.



Factory Air by Four Seasons offers an add on Electronic Evaporator Dryer part number 69300. This unit operates the same as the original equipment ones mentioned above.

Another option to help eliminate build up is to manually “heat” the evaporator core and set the re-circ door to fresh. To do this, the car owner will need to turn his A/C to fresh air, or normal A/C and then turn the compressor off, leaving the blower on high, when nearing his home. By doing this, the evaporator will warm to ambient temperature and prohibit moisture build up on the core. By eliminating the damp environment, bacteria will not grow and our foul smells will stay out of the car.