

GENERAL INFORMATION

General Cooling System Service

* PLEASE READ THIS FIRST *

This article is generic in nature and all information does not apply to all vehicles including those without a liquid cooling system. For vehicle specific information, see the appropriate articles in the ENGINE category.

DESCRIPTION

The liquid cooling system consists of a radiator, water pump, thermostat, electric or belt-driven cooling fan, pressure cap, heater, and various connecting hoses and cooling passages in the engine block and cylinder head.

MAINTENANCE

DRAINING

Remove radiator cap and open heater control valve to maximum heat position. Open drain cocks or remove plugs in bottom of radiator and engine block. In-line engines usually have one plug or drain cock, while "V" type engines have 2, one in each bank of cylinders.

FLUSHING

CAUTION: Some manufacturers use an aluminum and plastic radiator. Flushing solution must be compatible with aluminum.

Radiator

Connect flushing gun to water outlet of radiator. Disconnect water inlet hose. To prevent flooding engine, use a hose connected to radiator inlet. Use air in short bursts to prevent damage to radiator. Continue flushing until water runs clear.

Engine Block

To flush engine, remove thermostat. Connect flushing gun to water outlet of radiator. Use air in short bursts to prevent damage to radiator. Continue flushing until water runs clear.

REFILLING

To prevent air from being trapped in engine block, engine should be running when refilling cooling system. After system is full, continue running engine until thermostat is open, then recheck fill level. Do not overfill system.

TESTING

THERMOSTAT

1. Remove and inspect thermostat for corrosion and proper seating of valve. If okay, suspend thermostat and thermometer in a 50/50 mixture of coolant and water. See [Fig. 1](#). DO NOT allow thermostat or thermometer to touch bottom or container. Heat water until thermostat begins to open.
2. Read temperature on thermometer. This is the initial opening temperature and should be within specification. Continue heating water until thermostat is fully open and note temperature. This is the fully open temperature. If either reading is not to specification, replace thermostat.

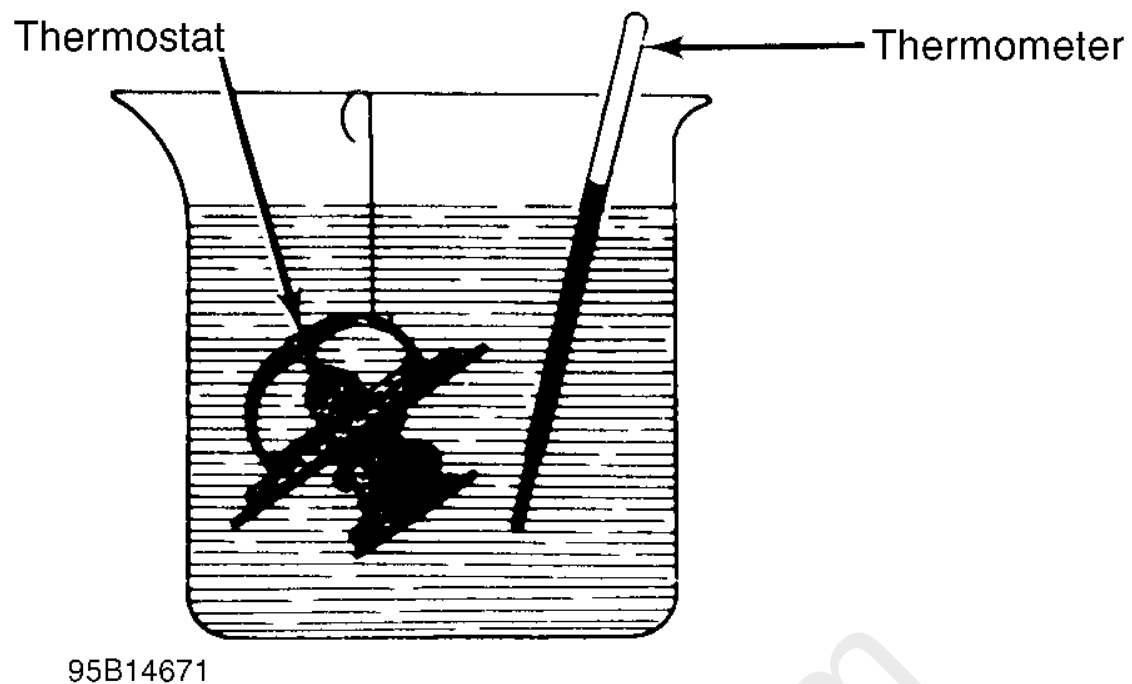


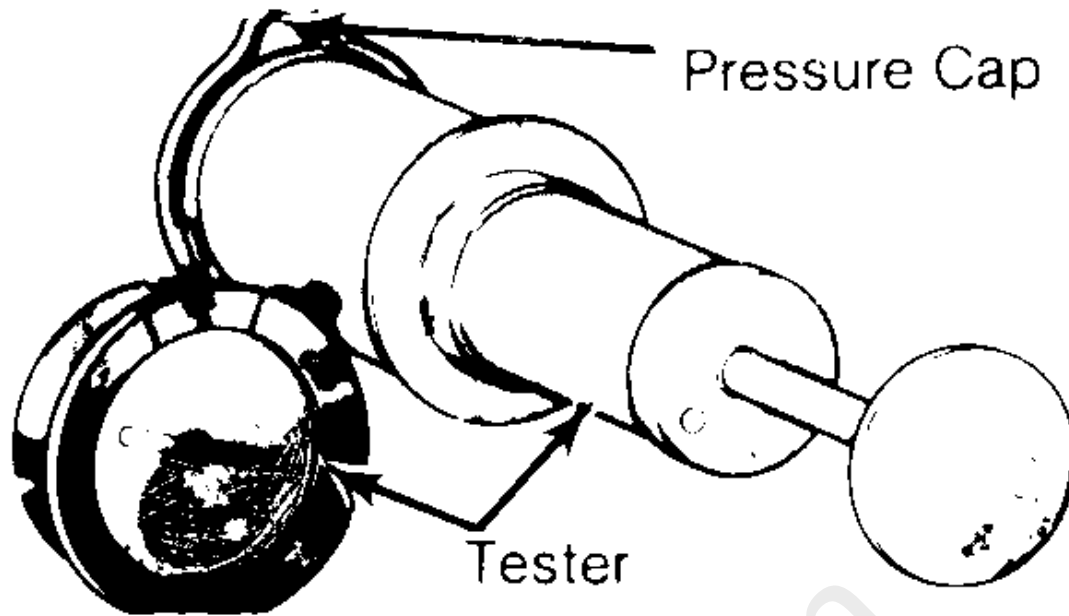
Fig. 1: Testing Thermostat in Coolant/Water Solution

PRESSURE TESTING

A pressure tester is used to check both radiator cap and complete cooling system. Follow pressure tester manufacturer instructions and test components as follows:

Radiator Cap

Visually inspect radiator cap. If cap looks okay, connect pressure tester to cap. See [Fig. 2](#). Pressurize tester to full radiator cap specification. Replace cap if it fails to hold pressure.



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Fig. 2: Pressure Testing Radiator Cap

Cooling System

1. Turn ignition off and allow engine to cool. Ensure radiator is filled to correct level. Remove cap and attach pressure tester to radiator. Pressurize tester to full radiator rating specification.
2. If pressure drops, check for external leaks. If no leaks are found, start engine and allow to idle. If pressure builds up immediately, check cylinder head and block for cracks. If pressure does not build up immediately, go to next step.

CAUTION: DO NOT allow excess pressure to build in cooling system or damage may result.

3. Using pressure tester, pump cooling system up to pressure specified on radiator cap. If pump gauge pointer vibrates, compression or combustion leak into cooling system is indicated. Isolate leak by shorting each spark plug wire to cylinder block. Gauge pointer vibration will stop or decrease when leaking cylinder is shorted.
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