

# What are the Symptoms of a Bad AC Compressor?

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Your car AC compressor is designed to pressurize the refrigerant that is running through the air conditioner. That's what makes your car's AC system produce cool air. To keep the refrigerant flowing through the AC system, *and* keep it under pressure, *and* at a high temperature, the AC compressor must work properly. But, naturally, AC compressors eventually need repair or replacement. Here we'll look at the most common symptoms of a broken AC compressor.

## How Does The AC Compressor Work?

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The AC compressor compresses the vapor of the air conditioner refrigerant to convert it from its low-pressure state into a high-pressure gas. Under high pressure, the high temperature of the gas causes it to circulate and release cold air. Because of the refrigerant circulating through the vehicle's air conditioning system in this state, the air coming from the air conditioner's dashboard vents is cold when the AC is turned on.

## Symptoms of Bad AC Compressor

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Of course, as with any other working part on a car, the AC compressor goes through a lot of wear and tear over time and, at some point will need repair or replacement. The AC compressor will show signs that a repair is needed, which will help you figure out what is wrong.

## Air Conditioner is Not Cooling

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If you find your vehicle's AC not cooling the inside of your car, that is typically a symptom of a bad AC compressor. A damaged or worn-out compressor can no longer regulate refrigerant flow as necessary for normal functioning, so the air conditioner does not cool properly. You may find your car AC blowing hot air. Or, you may find very little or no airflow at all coming from the AC vents when the AC is turned on. These are signs that the AC compressor is no longer functioning and needs to be replaced.

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## **Loud Clattering Noise**

A loud rattling noise coming from your car's air conditioner when it is turned on is a symptom of a problem with the AC compressor. The compressor consists of an assembly of various component parts. If one or more parts break, the unit may make a clattering noise. Often a broken AC compressor will try unsuccessfully to turn off and on. The best solution to this problem is to replace the AC compressor rather than attempt to repair it.

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## **Fluid Leaking**

If there is fluid leaking from your AC compressor, that is an indicator of a malfunction in the part. The AC compressor has bearings inside that stop fluid from leaking out. When the bearings are damaged or become worn out from long-term use, fluid can leak from them. Refrigerant leaking from an automobile AC compressor can cause the air conditioner to stop working. It can also present a potentially serious health risk. So, as a priority, while looking for signs of an AC compressor problem, check to be sure the system has refrigerant still in it.

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## **AC Compressor Clutch Not Working**

When the clutch of an AC compressor is not moving, that is a sure sign of a problem with that auto part. The clutch enables the AC compressor to draw power from your car's engine only when needed to run the AC. If the clutch is seized up, it cannot keep the compressor engaged continuously. If the clutch is broken, the compressor can't receive power from the engine.

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## **AC Compressor Maintenance**

To keep your car cool and comfortable in hot weather, the AC refrigerant must continue to flow without disruption through the car's AC system. It must remain consistently under high pressure and at high temperature to keep your AC blowing cold air. Your car's AC compressor must be properly maintained for these conditions to stay in balance.

That includes keeping the AC drive belts clean and in good condition. Additionally, you should run your vehicle's air conditioner for a minimum of ten minutes once each week to circulate the fluids and keep the gas from the refrigerant inside the chambers of the AC unit.

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