

Wheels: An e-mail from Joe says, “I have a 1989 Chevrolet Cavalier Z-24 with 112,000 miles. During the winter when the temperature drops below 10 degrees, it leaks a little bit of antifreeze. Above 10 degrees, it does not leak at all. In the summer after I’ve started the car, about four times on short trips, I hear a “ticking” sound on about the fifth start which lasts about 30 seconds, and then it goes away. When the engine is cold, it doesn’t make the noise. What’s wrong with this car?”

Halderman: The coolant loss is hard to diagnose without testing. The normal procedure is to pressure test the cooling system and then look for a pressure drop and a sign of leakage. In some cases, a dye added to the coolant makes locating the leak easier. I assume that your vehicle is equipped with the V-6 engine and this engine does have a pattern failure for leaking intake manifold gasket leaks. I would check out this area. The engine noise when hot could be due to the oil getting very hot and becoming too thin. Some years of your engine used an aluminum oil pump, which can expand in size when hot reducing the oil pressure. Be sure to use the recommended grade of oil (SAE 10W-30). If that is being done and the noise is still occurring, have the oil pressure checked. Oil pressure should be about 10 psi per 1000 engine revolutions per minute (RPM).

