

Wheels: Andy writes, “I am having a problem with my 1996 Ford Contour engine cooling fan. The car has only one fan (some models have 2), which does not come on when the temperature gauge starts to get hot. The fan will come on when the air conditioner (or defrost) is selected, so I have prevented an overheated engine by running the air during the last couple months while I have been attempting to troubleshoot the problem. I replaced the temperature coolant sensor, the temperature switch in the thermostat housing, and the thermostat without any change in the condition. I have not changed the high or low speed relays. Is there somewhere I can find a factory troubleshooting guide that would tell me what voltage to find at what locations to further locate the problem? How can I tell if the temperature gauge is accurate? My Haynes manual is not very helpful. I have hesitated taking it to the local Ford dealer for fear that they will charge me a lot for labor without resolving the problem.”

Halderman: First be sure that the fan is operating as designed. It is only commanded on if the temperature exceeds 235-250 degrees. Because the fan works when the air conditioning is on, this tells you that the relay and the fan motor are OK. There may be an engine problem or a radiator problem.

