

Wheels: I received the following e-mail from Gene. “I have a ’92 Taurus (103,000 miles) and a ’94 Taurus (76,000 miles). Both have 3.8 engines, automatic with air and both have the same symptoms. When running at speeds between 40 and 45 MPH there is a problem with acceleration. It seems to miss as if there is a fuel or spark problem. Recently I had the ’94 tuned-up at the dealer where I purchased the car and the problem is still there. The dealer said that they would have to into it a little deeper to find the problem. I kind of felt that into my wallet was where they wanted to go deeper. I get the feeling that this is a chronic problem with some Ford products. Is this enough info for you? Any help will be very much appreciated.”

Halderman: Thanks for writing. Do you want the good news or the bad news first? Yes, there are some chronic problems with the 3.8 liter V-6 (head gaskets). If they are defective, it can cause your concern. They may be covered by a recall from Ford but maybe not, due to the miles on your cars. Check with a different Ford dealer. Several other items could be causing your problem, including the automatic transmission. Try to “lightly” touch the brake pedal when you are having the problem, and if it clears up, the torque converter clutch has applied and the engine may miss under this higher load condition. A defective ignition coil, plug wires, etc. could be the cause. Most of these problems are relatively inexpensive. Another possible problem involves the EGR system. It may need to be cleaned by removing the EGR valve and using a snakelike tool to remove the carbon. A search of the archives at the International Automotive Technicians Network website (www.iatn.net) indicates many similar driveability problems have been corrected by cleaning the mass air flow sensor. Be prepared to pay a service technician to diagnose the problem. This diagnostic charge is almost always less expensive than having parts replaced until the problem is solved.

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