

Wheels: Archie writes, “In your recent column, I read with interest the question of Katlyn of California, where you addressed the correct timing belt replacement interval for her 1997 Honda Civic. She stated (and you confirmed) that her engine is an interference engine. This information caused me to wonder about the engine in my automobile. I have a 1997 Toyota Corolla DDX with the 1.8 liter 7A-FE engine. I have not been able to determine if this engine is a non-interference or interference engine. Can you help me with this?”

Halderman: According to the information I have on file, your engine (1.8 liter SOHC) is free-wheeling (non-interference). I also checked and confirmed the information on the website of a timing belt manufacturer (www.gates.com). That is good news but you should still replace the timing belt according to the factory recommended interval to avoid a belt failure, which can occur at any time when the engine is running. The engine will stop running and, of course, will not start but will crank faster than normal because of no compression in the cylinders.

