

Wheels: John has a 1995 Pontiac Transport mini van with a 3.8 liter, V-6 engine with 80,000 miles. He states that the transaxle will quit shifting into overdrive after driving for a while. The transaxle works normally again after it has cooled. Do you think I have a computer or a transaxle problem?

Halderman: The most likely cause of your problem is a faulty torque converter clutch (TCC) solenoid. The torque converter clutch (also called a lockup converter) is used to eliminate slippage inside the torque converter to provide improved fuel economy. When the TCC applies, it feels exactly like another shift. This is why John thinks that the transaxle is not shifting into overdrive.

Wheels: Is there a way John can verify that the problem is due to the TCC without having to take it to a trained certified service technician?

Halderman: The circuit for the torque converter clutch runs through the brake switch. When driving above 50 mph on a straight level road, lightly depress the brake pedal. The TCC should disengage and the engine speed should increase about 150 to 250 RPM. If no difference in engine speed is noticed, then the TCC may not be functioning correctly. The good news is that the transaxle does not need to be removed to replace the TCC solenoid.

