

WHEELS: *Esther of Dayton writes: “I have a 1989 Dodge Spirit LE I bought from a friend of my grandson. It was leaking some sort of fluid, not bad, but enough I was concerned. I took it to a friend of my sons who told me it was the rack and pinion gear. I really needed to put a new one on it. The cost for labor and parts was over \$300. I don't go anywhere unless it's a necessity. This mechanic said he wouldn't drive it outside city limits. He really upset me and I've been afraid to go anywhere at all. Then someone knew a guy who said he could fix nearly everything. He said to go to an auto parts store and buy an additive for power steering. Drain the unit and fill up with this and it would seal around the leak. My question is, will this do the job and stop the leak with no harm done? Should I invest in it and could I drive farther than I do now and not worry?”*

Halderman: Thanks for writing. This is a tough one to answer because I always try to recommend that vehicles be serviced and repaired using the factory recommended products and procedures. Your vehicle is now over 20 years old so lower cost options may be appropriate now. A couple of thoughts:

1. If the steering gear is leaking from the ends out of the rubber boots, this means that the internal seals are leaking. Because these are in a high-pressure part of the system, an additive will not usually help.
2. If the leak is located at the high-pressure hose, either the pump itself or at the steering gear assembly (rack and pinion steering gear), a replacement high-pressure hose is needed. This is the most likely cause of the power steering leak and will cost less than a replacement steering gear assembly.
3. Using an additive may or may not slow or stop the leak, depending on the location of the leak.

Therefore, I think more information is needed. If you decide to use a stop leak chemical, be sure to follow the instructions on the container.

