

Wheels: An e-mail from Keith in Englewood says, “My 1997 Ford Aspire (made by Kia Motors) has been plagued by a problem that three mechanics failed to fix. Symptoms: every time it rains or even gets very humid here in southwest Ohio, the engine putters/misses/loses power. This problem doesn't present itself when the air is fairly dry. The following have been replaced, to no avail: distributor cap, spark plug wires, spark plugs, EGR unit, air filter, both the upstream and downstream oxygen sensors, and maybe some others I've forgotten. I've also tried adding a fuel injector cleaner additive to the gas. The only thing I can do to help alleviate this somewhat is to let the engine warm up completely and idle for about 15-20 minutes. It gets better, but doesn't completely stop missing/sputtering. One mechanic found a code (#4 cylinder misfire), but he had no solution, and the check engine light stays on. I can't afford to spend a lot on the fix for this, but I'd like to keep the car because of the 38 mpg aspect! Your consideration in this is greatly appreciated.”

Halderman: Whenever there is a problem with the engine not running correctly when wet, it is almost always due to a problem in the secondary ignition system. It appears that everything in the secondary ignition system has been replaced except the ignition coil. This, plus being sure that all of the replacement parts are in good condition and good quality, should cure the problem.

