

Wheels: Dennis says, "I drive a 2002 Honda Accord 5 speed. When I first start the car, the throttle is "stuck." The sticking is easily overcome with more foot pressure but I am worried that this problem may become more severe over time. I think I may have a sticky/dirty throttle position sensor, but I am not sure how to go about cleaning it."

Halderman: The most common cause of a sticking throttle is carbon and varnish buildup on the throttle plate. The throttle position sensor would not normally cause this condition. To correct the problem, remove the air inlet hose at the throttle body and use a spray throttle-body cleaner to remove the deposits on the throttle plate, as well as in the throttle body. This is now considered to be part of routine service and can be done by a professional for a reasonable rate. The symptoms that may indicate that the throttle plate needs to be cleaned includes a rough idle (can be occurring just sometimes, depending on weather, temperature, etc.), as well as a stall condition or hesitation while first accelerating.

The procedure for cleaning the throttle plate area includes:

1. With the engine off, the air inlet hose needs to be removed from the throttle body.
2. Using throttle body cleaner, both sides of the throttle plate(s) need to be cleaned, as well as the inside the throttle body itself.
3. Reattach the inlet hose and start the engine. The engine may not run correctly for several minutes until the computer has relearned the proper idle speed.

