

Wheels: An e-mail from Andreas says, “Ever since I bought my used 1996 Ranger (V-6, automatic, 4WD), I have encountered an annoying intermittent stalling problem that my independent mechanic and the Ford dealership have not been able to solve. One common factor I have noted is that the stalling occurs only on hot (above 85°F), humid days. Stalling occurs after the truck has been driven a while, usually 10 to 15 minutes, and is then shut down for an equal length of time. On restart, the engine initially starts up but almost immediately drops to less than 500 RPM and stalls. After several restarts, and giving a little extra gas in neutral, I can get the transmission into “drive” and pull away, only to stall again as soon as I have to slow or come to a stop. After five or six such stalls and restarts, the engine will eventually run normally until the next hot humid day. There are no codes stored in the truck’s computer to help diagnose this problem. The Ford dealer service manager mumbled something about “hot soak” but could not explain what that meant or how it applied to my problem. Your thoughts are appreciated!”

Halderman: It is difficult to diagnose a problem long distance, but I will try to give some ideas as to what to check. I checked the archives of www.iatn.net and located just one reference to your exact problem and it turned out to be the idle air control. A dirty throttle plate could also cause your problem as well as dirt on the sensing wire in the mass air flow (MAF) sensor. I would be sure the throttle plate is clean by using a shop cloth with throttle body cleaner. Depress the throttle (engine off) and be sure the backside of the plate and the throttle bore is clean. I would then disconnect the negative battery cable and depress the brake pedal to discharge all the capacitors to clear the learned idle speed. Reconnect the battery and allow the engine to run at idle speed in “drive” until it is smooth and then drive normally. You will have to reset all the radio stations. You can also try cleaning the MAF sensor but this is a very sensitive unit so be careful.

