

**Wheels:** A recent e-mail asks, “I have a 1989 Taurus, which I have had since it was new. One hot day last year, I noticed a whistling sound from the car. When I took off the gas cap a “puff” sound could be heard much like a bottle of pop that had been ½ full and shaken up. This whistling or humming sound only happens on a hot day while driving the car and will continue for quite a while or until the gas cap is removed and pressure is let out of the tank.

After some time, a pin-hole developed in the gas tank towards the end of the summer. Once the gas tank was replaced with another one I thought that would cure it, but it continued. Then in January of this year, the fuel pump, which is in the gas tank, went bad. It too was replaced. This summer, the hissing sound returned on hot days after driving. I had the gas cap checked last year and it passed a pressure check. This year a mechanic told me the gas cap could be defective and not allow excess pressure to leave the tank, so I replaced it with a new one from a discount auto part store. Do you think this will solve my problem?”

**Halderman:** The new gas cap could solve your problem, however, your concern may be a symptom of another problem. It is normal to have some pressure buildup in the fuel tank, especially in hot weather. The gas cap does have a pressure release as well as a vacuum relief valve built into the unit to help prevent excessive pressures or vacuum. The evaporative control system should allow fumes to flow from the fuel tank to the carbon canister. As the engine is operated, these fumes are drawn into the engine and are burned, thereby preventing these unburned hydrocarbons from escaping into the atmosphere. To avoid problems with the evaporative system, do not overfill your fuel tank. When the nozzle clicks off, add just enough fuel to bring the cost to the next even 10 cents. Over filling the tank can saturate the carbon canister. Also, try to avoid using alcohol- enhanced fuel during hot weather. The ethanol (grain alcohol) used in some gasoline today has a higher Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP), which can contribute to your concern. Try switching to another name brand of gasoline to see if this makes a difference. Cooler weather will also help reduce the problem you describe.

