

Wheels: An e-mail from Bob says, “I have a Dodge Caravan and it starts but then dies. What could be wrong?”

Halderman: I will try to answer this question but without knowing more information it is difficult. What would be helpful to know includes the following:

- Year of the vehicle
- Engine (if known)
- Number of miles on the vehicle
- More about the problem, such as does the problem occur only the first time in the morning or every time the engine is started?

I am going to assume that the engine starts and then dies first thing in the morning. One of the simplest problems could be a dirty throttle plate. If the throttle plate and surrounding area is dirty, it blocks the flow of air and could cause this problem along with an occasional rough idle. This can be cleaned using spray throttle body cleaner and an old toothbrush. However, there are many other possible reasons that will require a professional to pin down. Some other faults that can cause this condition include leaking fuel injectors, a weak fuel pump, or worn spark plugs.

