

A/C Controllers Are Repairable!

By Ignacio "Nacho" Corella

Customer complaint: On 1997 and newer Chevy Malibu's, after about 45 minutes of running the a/c on Max Cooling, the light on the recirculation control button starts blinking. It

A blinking A/C light and intermittent operation may be caused by failing controller.

Controller may be repairable, saving the customer hundreds of dollars.

doesn't happen on other settings. Cooling becomes intermittent while the light blinks.

continued on page 18



Above: Photo 1. 1997 Malibu panel with the Control Head and bezel removed.



Above: Photo 2. Control Head removed. This unit is probably suffering from dirty contacts. With proper technique, this part can be restored to a servicable condition and live for several years.

The next generation of UV Lights has arrived!



- Don't be confused by imitations using blue or 'near UV' LEDs
- AIRMAX™ lights use only True UV LEDs
- Over 50,000 hour rating on LED
- The most compact UV Leak Detection lights in the world!
- Battery operated - No cords to tangle
- Cool operating - Light weight
- Unlimited "constant-on" operation without overheating
- Works with ALL UV Dyes

AIRMAX™ UV LED lights are the most efficient UV Leak Detection Lights because they produce true UV Light, not blue or 'near UV' light. They are the world's most compact, light weight and coolest operating lights on the market that have an unlimited "constant-on" rating without overheating. Best of all... battery operation means no power cords to tie your hands. It's the only UV Light that can truly go where no other light can.

Besides, take a moment to check your light that you thought was UV. Did you know that UV Light is not visible? The blue light you see is only 'near UV' light that does not always fluoresce UV dyes. That could be the difference between finding the leak or not. That's why you need an AIRMAX™ UV Leak Detection light today!

UV Light is not visible.
If your UV light shines blue...
it's not UV!

in the United States contact:
SI Santech Industries, Inc.
317-589-1212 Fax: 317-589-5900
See us at
MACSW Show Booth 216-219
www.santech.com

Mobilair 2000, P.O. Box 32, Station U, Toronto
CANADA M2Z 3M4 www.keep-it-cool.com

continued from page 16

A/C SERVICE Tip—Fix The Controller, Don't Replace It!

You can temporarily stop the blink and restart the cooling by leaving the system off for a few minutes. Problem comes back in about 10-15 minutes.

Dealer repair?

If the Malibu is out of warranty, most dealers will recommend a new, improved control head. In fact though, all you need is a little curiosity and ingenuity. After we sold a couple control heads, we started experimenting on the "dead" ones. We soon found that they could be brought back to life. The steps are documented in this article.

Get it right

The trick is to make sure that both the contacts and brushes make PERFECT

contact. The best way to accomplish that is by lifting the contacts and cleaning the PCB (Printed Circuit Board). We just use a small screwdriver as a lifting device. The PCB contacts and brushes are cleaned with a soft rag and alcohol, and dried with canned air. I do not suggest

using even a very fine sand paper; the PCB can probably not take that abrasion.

After cleaning, we apply one very thin coat of graphite to the contacts and brushes. A #2 pencil can work, but a thinner one is better yet. You are working in a very tight area. continued on page 20



Photo 3. Remove the knobs from the Control Head.



Photo 4. Gently pry the face off of the Control head. Here we are using a small screw driver.

Automotive Air International, Inc.



Clardy MFG.



Your Best Source for A/C Parts and Units



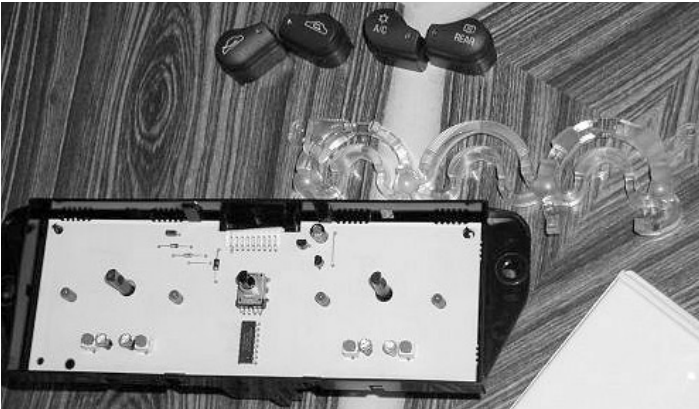
P.O. Box 336 - Addison, Texas 75001 - U.S.A. - Phone: 972-245-3313 - FAX: 972-245-1165
www.aaiusa.com - E-Mail: info@aaiusa.com

With everything cleaned and graphite coated, start the reassembly by reversing the steps you used to get to this point.

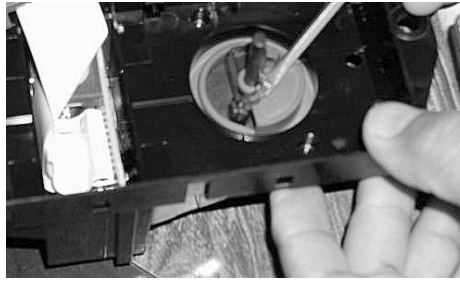


Above: Photo 5. View beneath the Control Head face plate.

Below: Photo 6. Remove Control Head parts.



A/C Tech Tip—Controller Repair



Left: Photo 8. Screwdriver points to the brushes which must make perfect contact with the related surface on the PCB. Alcohol applied with a soft rag, dried with canned air and a very fine coating of graphite.

Cost of Control Head

I'm sure that most are aware that AC Delco is prone to change part numbers regularly. However, the Delco P/N for the Control Head that I see quite often is: 15-72609. Here in Mexico, this control retails for an average of \$175.00. I'd say that in the U.S., it will retail for less than \$200 including labor.

Repair time

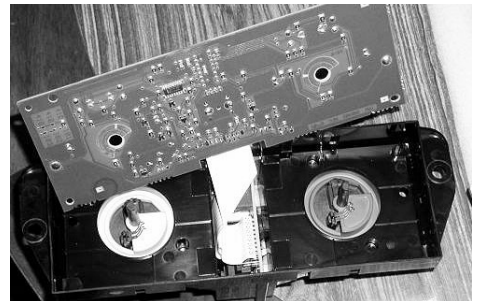
A newbie technician can easily take two or three hours to complete this job, given the fear of the unknown and of breaking things.

Using an experi-

enced tech, for vehicles with this problem, we now turn them around in less than an hour. We charge \$20.00 but do it free for friends and relatives. In writing this article I realized how low that is; we may change our pricing. Of course, it's a great "good will" opportunity for very important customers.

Reliability of repair

We've officially performed this serv-



Above: Photo 7. Loosen and slip out the Control Head's PCB (Printed Circuit Board).



The Accumulator

Accumulating & Sharing information by Independent Shop Owners

NEWS AND INFORMATION PUBLICATION OF THE AUTOMOTIVE AIR GROUP

Is your association giving you the A/C Technical Information and Shop Tips you really need?

If not, become a member of the Automotive Air Group (AAG).

Join other A/C shop owners, managers and technicians who share their knowledge and problem-solving skills.

Ask those burning, tough questions that are arise in YOUR shop.

We need YOUR input... and you need ours.

Reasons to join the Automotive Air Group

- The Accumulator, a monthly technical newsletter
- Technical Service Hotline.
- Nationwide Warranty Program.
- Contacts for special pricing to members on A/C parts, tools and equipment
- Membership only \$100 per year

Contact: Spencer Riddell, President @ 321-259-6522 or Ben Altman, Vice President @ 843-522-8899 or John Silvestri, Treasurer @ 940-464-4447
Check out our website: www.proacshops.com

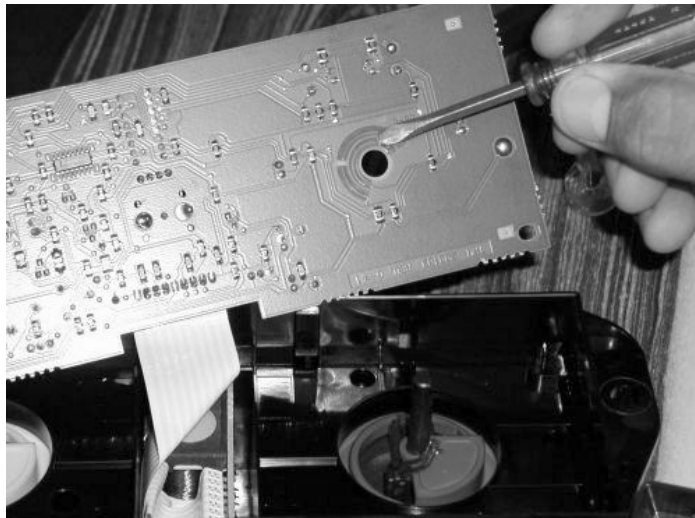
The AAG is a self-managed group (no paid employees) of auto, truck and off-highway a/c shop owners and technicians.

ice on 15 Malibu's. Oldest being 1997 (release year) and newer being 1999 (supposedly, problem has been cured).

We've had only one comeback. Well, even that one wasn't really our fault. I tried to instruct a friend who owns an auto detail facility to do the repair over the phone. A couple of months later, he brought the Malibu in and we fixed it together. Other than this, no problems have been reported by users. We keep 3 new units on stock, however.

Wonder how many heads are just chucked?...GM/Delco won't care. Gosh! \$20 is way too little money! \$\$\$

Nacho Corella is the owner of CEKSA Autoclimas, an automotive repair facility in Hermosillo,



Above: Photo 9. Screwdriver points to contact surface on the PCB. This area is to be cleaned with alcohol and a soft rag and dried with canned air. Follow this with a very thin layer of pencil-lead graphite.

Mexico specializing in air conditioning service.

www.autoclimas.com.mx

icorella@autoclimas.com.mx
526-210-3501 (Country Code from the US: 011); Toll-free in Mexico: 800-222-AIRE; Fax: 526-210-1607.

REFRIGERANTS INC.

Automotive R-12 and R-134a at very competitive prices.

Free freight (with minimum order). Both 30 lb. and 12 oz. cans available.



We'll ship any size order!

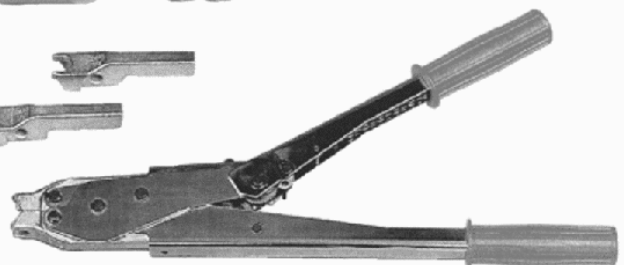
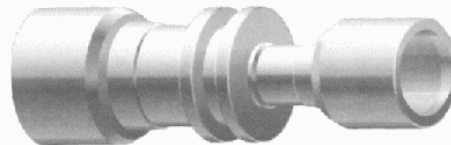
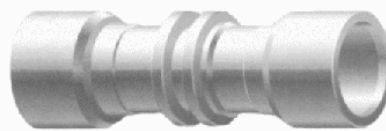


For a price list, Call 888-881-3255 Fax: 402-597-9121

STOPS A/C LEAKS

NO NEED TO FIND THE LEAKS TO SEAL THEM PERMANENTLY!!! FAST & EASY WITH WARRANTY...

**1.800.237.4001
www.ssrintl.com
sales@ssrintl.com**



No Welding, No Flames, No Flux

Join tubing without welding. Union, Reducer, and Service Ports for joining aluminum, copper or steel tubing to same or dissimilar metals. One Handtool with interchangeable jaws for sizes 1/16" to 7/8".

Call for COOL PROFITS Special!!

American LOKRING Corporation

Tel 941-325-9262 www.lokringusa.com Fax 941-324-4008