LINDER TECHNICAL SERVICES

Networking

Newsletter

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Manufacturers Promise Accessibility

In a historic letter dated Sept. 20, 2002, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers (AIAM) and the Automotive Service Association (ASA) announced an agreement where vehicle manufacturers pledged to provide independent repair shops with the same service an training information as franchised dealerships. It reads: "Automobile manufacturers hereby commit to make available, by August 331, 2002, emission and non-emission-related service information, training information and diagnostic tools. This means that: 1. The same service and training information related to vehicle repair will be made available to independent repair shops either via the internet, or in the same manner and extent as it is made available to franchised dealerships and 2. The same diagnostic tools related to vehicle repair that are made available to franchised dealers will be made available to the independent repair shops. These will be made available at a reasonable price consistent with the guidelines provided in CARB (California Air Resources Board) regulations. Service and training information and manufacturer tools will be available to independent repair whips without the need for them to return to a franchised dealership (to the extent allowed by law)."

The letter also stated that the National Automotive Service Task Force (NASTF) will continue to provide a forum for the industry and the aftermarket to resolve service information issues. This comes on the heels of an announcement by NASTF that completion of the task forces' tool and training matrices should be completed this fall. NASTF provides information directly from vehicle manufacturers, identifying the location of service information for nearly all vehicle makes. This information is collected and made available for technicians at the task forces' website: www.nastf.org. An update for the service matrix is also expected before the end of the year

The organizations releasing the agreement also stated that is "precludes the need for current legislation while it is implemented, and implementation should eliminate the need for future state and federal legislation." The piece of legislation to which they are referring is the Motor Vehicle Owner's Right to Repair Act, which would require, by law, manufacturers to share data necessary for vehicle repair with independent repair shops.

Following this statement, the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association (AAIA) and Automotive Warehouse Distributors Association (AWDA) released plans to continue in their efforts to get the Right To Repair Act passed. Their concerns stem from a fear that without a body to enforce the policy, the vehicle manufacturers will make independents purchase manufacturer-specific tools at a higher price.

(The preceding paragraphs were taken from an article that was featured in the popular magazine, "Parts Tools and Equipment News")

OK, now what does this mean to the working stiff, the day-to-day automotive service technician? My answer to this question has varied over the last 2 years, but after our trip to Las Vegas last month during the Automotive Industry Week, I think I have my final answer.

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During industry week, I had the pleasure of sitting in on several "information meetings" regarding the latest offerings from many OEM manufacturers as well as aftermarket groups, etc. One of these was sponsored by the Automotive Service Association (ASA) and each OEM was asked to show their latest "Electronic Service" products on supplied PC computers to the group. ***Although very poorly organized,*** we were shown OEM website offerings from GM, Isuzu, Honda, Kia, Ford, Mazda, BMW, Chrysler, Toyota, Nissan, Subaru and VW/Audi. Many of these sites were in the dreaded "demo" mode, but some were running full blown with the promise of all being available by the 1st quarter of 2003.

Just imagine a "technician PC terminal" in your bay with all of the OEM service information that an actual dealership would have available 24 hours a day! Talk about just in time! This would be the ultimate!

OK, now let's assume that for the time being, we have caught the "information bus". The next question is: What does all of this cost? Well, it certainly isn't going to be free! The OEM's each had their own pricing structure ranging from $50.00 per month up to $1,500.0 per year. Some have a per usage fee, but most all agreed that there would be some type of fee.

Is this the fix that we asked for? Only time will tell. For now, all we know for sure is that we seem to have caught the "information bus". What we do with it and how we handle it will be another issue by itself. What will the OEM's think when no one buys their products? Are we as a service industry ready for electronic service delivery methods? Can we utilize the latest methods of web-based training delivery? Is your third-grader more qualified to run these programs?

More next month on the Information trail……..
Jim Linder

Analysis from the "Sleuth", Michele Winn

This month's case study is on a 1998 GMC Jimmy equipped with a 4.3L "W" engine with around 70,000 miles on the odometer. The customer complains that the check engine light is on, but no driveability symptoms are present.

A quick scan with the Tech-2 showed the following codes:
P0135: HO2S Heater Circuit, Bank 1, Sensor 1
P0147: HO2S Heater Circuit, Bank 1, Sensor 3
P0155: HO2S Heater Circuit, Bank 2, Sensor 1

I wasn't exactly sure where to start, so I **reluctantly** consulted the flow chart for the P0135. At least I knew I would find a circuit description along with a wiring diagram. Let's see what conditions have to be met to cause these DTC's to set:

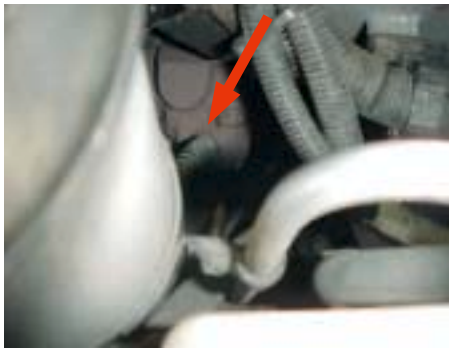
1. Engine must be running more than 2 seconds
2. ECT sensor is less than 89.3 degrees F
3. IAT is less than 89.3 degrees F
4. The MAF is less than 27 g/s
5. The difference between the ECT and IAT is no more than 41 degrees F

What does all of these mean? It looks as if this code will set only on cold start up with minimal engine load.

Analysis from the "Sleuth", Michele Winn (cont.)

I know that before I do any testing, the vehicle will probably have to cool off. My next step was to read thru the flow chart to see if I could find any useful information. The first thing it instructed me to do was to allow the vehicle to cool for at least 30 minutes (no kidding!) Next it asked that I connect the Tech-2, turn the key on and monitor the HO2S voltage. It should gradually decrease by 150mv. AHA! The voltage readings didn't change. This meant that I had an open fuse for the HO2S ignition feed. Piece of cake, right? According to the wiring diagram, I was looking for the ENG1 fuse located in the underhood fuse-relay center. Hmnnnnnn…...I can't seem to locate an ENG1 fuse, but I do see one labeled OXYSEN (probably Bubba spelling for Oxygen) and it's clearly blown. Should I replace it and hope everything will be fine? Could one or more of the O2 heaters be going bad and requiring too much current? I called Randy Dillman and ran my new theory by him to see what he thought. His answer was something like, "since you and Jim are so good with those current probes, why don't you USE it to prove your theory?" OK, I removed the fuse, put in a jumper and clamped the current probe around the jumper wire. Next, I disconnected 2 of the O2 sensors leaving only one plugged in. I turned the key "ON" and I was reading around 2Amps. So, I repeated the test two more times until I had isolated each of the 3 sensors. Each time I had the same result: just under 2Amps. Well, I guess I'll just replace the fuse and let the customer take the vehicle. As you may have guessed, the vehicle was back in our shop 2 days later with the same codes and the same blown fuse. Were those darned heaters intermittently causing trouble or was it the **MELTED HARNESS ON THE PASSENGER'S SIDE!!!**

Looking down on the harness, the protective material was still in place, as shown in the picture below. However, when I grabbed the harness with my hand, I felt a spot that had melted through. We all know that the correct repair would be to replace the entire wiring harness, but let's be realistic. I actually tried to order the harness from a local GM dealer with no luck. I know I'll get some calls and e-mails about this, but I chose to cut, splice and soldered in all new wires. The truck was fixed over 2 months ago and I have seen the customer several times since the repair. I can assure you that they haven't had any more problems with their vehicle. Remember, it's not only our job to fix the vehicle, but to fix it in an efficient (we make money), timely (the customer isn't without a car for 2 weeks) and professional manner.



Help Us Welcome our New Employee!!

Please help us welcome the newest addition to the LTS group, Susan Cooper. Susan's voice will now be the first one you hear when you call LTS. She will also help with technical writing, preparing books and manuals, writing customer invoices, reading and distributing lindertech e-mails, and UPS shipping for fuel injectors. Susan's husband and son are avid car "buffs" and she has been involved in several car shows with her family. I even caught her looking through Hot Rod magazine yesterday, so I think she will fit in with our group nicely.

If you would like to send her a quick e-mail, she can be reached at susan.cooper@juno.com. Otherwise, please introduce yourself to her the next time you call and remember to be patient as she not only learns the new phone system, but learns all of your new voices.

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!

Effective January 1, 2003, the Linder Technical Services monthly newsletters will **only be available by e-mail or by downloading from our website.** This is due to several factors:

1. It is very labor-intensive to print, fold, staple and mail each newsletter
2. It is very costly to produce these mass mailings each month.
3. Picture quality suffers when it is copied. However, we feel these pictures are very valuable and necessary when trying to explain a case study.

Due to these factors, our monthly newsletter will only be available electronically after January 1, 2003. We understand that there may be a few of you who still do not have the capability to download and print these newsletters by e-mail. In these cases, please contact Michele at 888-809-3835 or fax at 317-487-1868. A limited number of yearly subscriptions will be available for $39.95. In these cases, the newsletters will be printed in color so the picture quality does not suffer.

Please remember, the deadline is January 1st! If you want to continue receiving newsletters at no charge after the first of the year, please e-mail Michele at michele347@juno.com with your e-mail address.