

DO I SMELL ANTIFREEZE?

I've had several GL 1500 owners mention to me that they could smell antifreeze coming up from the right radiator on their Gold Wings. I told them to look for visible signs of leaks, and that if there were no signs of leakage, that it was probably normal. In other words, don't worry about it.

Then it happened to me. It started out as an intermittent antifreeze smell, but it got progressively worse. The smell actually came from two leakage sources that can not be found without removing the right fan and right radiator.

When Honda assembled my Gold Wing in Marysville, OH, it appears that Scotch Tape was wrapped around the inlets and outlets of both radiators to protect them from paint prior to painting them. The Scotch tape was never removed after painting them. The upper and lower hoses were installed OVER the Scotch tape!!

After approximately 111,000 miles on my Gold Wing and 80,000 on two others that I know of, the antifreeze smell became quite noticeable. I've repaired three GL 1500 Gold Wings, and found not only corrosion under the Scotch tape, but I also found very badly dry-rotted crossover hoses--the small 1/4" diameter hose, about 3 1/2 inches long, that runs from the top tank of one radiator to the top tank of the other. That hose was so hard and brittle that the spring clamps at each end couldn't create a seal strong enough to hold the 14+ psi pressure that normally builds up in the cooling system. I squeezed the hose to remove it and it shattered like a piece of glass.

I removed both radiators, unwrapped the Scotch tape, and cleaned the corrosion off of the upper and lower hose fittings. I also removed the filler neck from the upper radiator hose and removed the bottom of the upper hose from the engine to inspect for signs of leakage. I didn't find any signs of leaks, so I lubricated the ends of the upper hose with fresh antifreeze and reinstalled the hose and the plastic filler neck. I lubricated the hose clamps with a little WD-40 and tightened the clamps.

I replaced the crossover hose with a new one from the auto parts store and cut it to the same length as the original one. I used a new screw type hose clamp to clamp it to the left radiator, then I installed the left radiator. Then I installed the right radiator and the hoses. I refilled the cooling system with a 50% coolant 50% distilled water mixture after reading the ingredients to make sure there were no phosphates, silicates, or any other chemicals other than ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol, and water.

Since then, I've ridden about 70,000 miles and haven't noticed any more antifreeze smell.

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