

A/C Heater Core Repair Procedure

By: JAZZMAN

Non-A/C cars remove the heatercore from the front compartment. Being Texan, I've never seen a Fiero that didn't have A/C, but I understand that the non-A/C procedure is actually easier than the A/C one. Also, if you have a factory subwoofer you'll need to remove that first. It should be held on by no more than two 7mm screws. Anyway, here we go:

Before you begin, get some towels or newspaper and line the floorboard under the heater core to catch coolant that will spill out of the heaterbox when you remove the cover. Coolant, especially the concentrated oxidized stuff from a leaky heater core, is impossible to remove from carpet and will leave permanent stains.

First off, get a set of these plastic hose clamps, they'll make life a whole lot easier. I got these from O-Reilly's for \$9.99 plus sales tax:



Unbolt the washer fluid reservoir and move it aside. There is no need to disconnect the fluid line, but unplugging the electrical connector for the motor makes it a whole lot easier to move out of the way. Install the clamps on the heater hoses, undo the heater hose clamps and slide them down out of the way, then work the hoses off of the metal tubes going to the heater core:



If you want, have a couple of towels under the connections to catch any spillage, there won't be much.

Now you're done under the hood, so move into the passenger compartment.

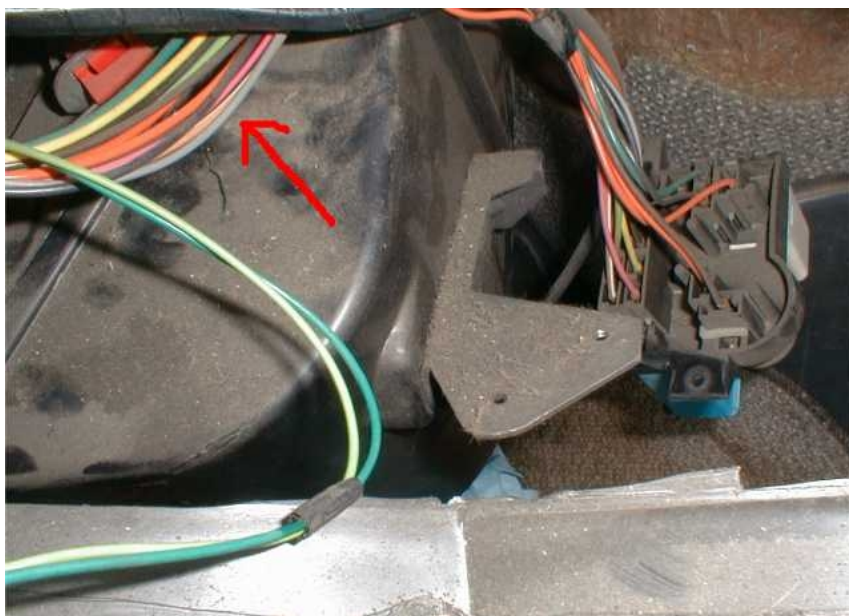
Remove the speaker grill using a wide, flat tool to pry with. I recommend a plastic spatula so that there won't be a sharp point of contact against the dash. That will help to prevent cracking the dash. After removing the grill, remove the speaker:



Next, using a 7mm nutdriver or socket, remove the convenience center that has the blue chime unit from the heater box cover bracket:



Looking down into the speaker hole you will see the top of the heater box. Remove the top screw holding the cover to the box, it's under the wires in this view:

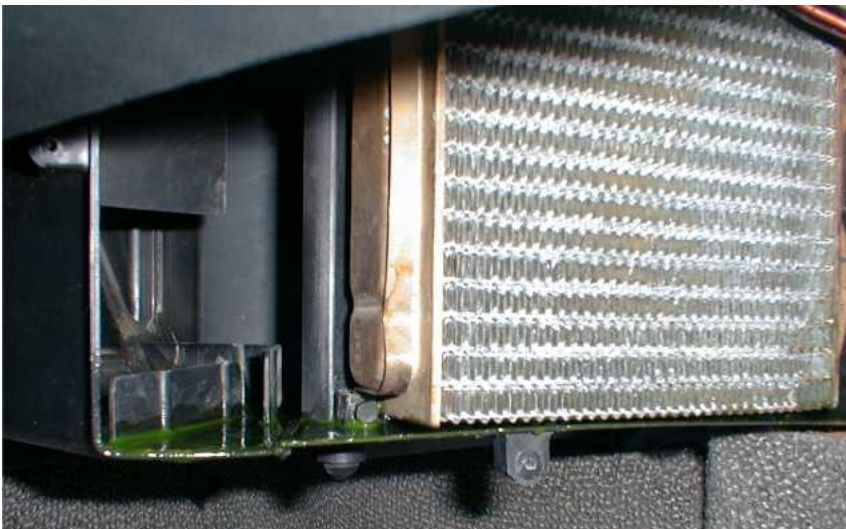


Next, remove the three remaining cover screws:



The cover will take some maneuvering to remove, but just twist and wiggle it around and it'll come out with no force at all.

Now you've exposed the heater core:



Remember what I said about the spilling coolant?



Now that you've exposed the heater core, using a 7mm nutdriver or socket, remove the two screws that hold the heatercore retaining strap on, and then remove the core:



Keep the core level or tilted such that the inlet and outlet tubes are pointed upwards to minimize coolant spillage. Take the core over to the front of the vehicle and pour the coolant out of the core back into the overflow bottle.

Once the core is removed, use a good cleaner and clean out as much of the coolant as you can find. Slide the temperature control lever to warm to open the flapper door inside the heaterbox, that will gain access to more places where coolant will be hiding. The more you clean up, the less it will smell like coolant.

Installing the new core and reassembling everything is the reverse of disassembly, and should be fairly straight forward. Top off and burp the cooling system as normal, run the car until hot to check for leaks before putting the heater core cover back on. As an indicator of how easy this procedure is, it took me longer to type this out and crop the pictures than it would have for me to actually replace a heater core in my Fiero. 😊

Enjoy, and good luck!

JazzMan

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