

insider info.

Refrigerant Cross Contamination

1994 and later Legacy, Impreza and SVX models are equipped with R-134a air conditioning systems. However, all Loyale and Justy models were originally equipped with R12 systems (unless they were retrofitted later). Keep this information in mind when servicing or diagnosing Subaru A/C systems.

R134a is the refrigerant of choice. This product does not contain suspected ozone depleting chloroflourocarbons. The chemical compounds and molecular structures of the old refrigerant R12 and the new refrigerant R134a are completely different. However, the temperature/pressure relationships of the two are very similar.

R134a and R12 are not compatible. Under no circumstances should they be mixed. If you suspect that a refrigerant system has been tampered with or may be contaminated, observe the following general rules.

Symptoms of a contaminated system may be any of the following:

- High to extremely high system pressure; the higher the mix of contamination, the higher the pressure will be.
- Poor cooling
- Rapid cycling of the compressor

Inspect for:

- Correct condenser fan operation
- Debris in front of the condenser
- Correct blower fan operation
- Charge/caution label
- Service ports, stripped threads (from wrong fittings)
- Cloudy, milky sight glass

Contact the customer for:

- Repair history
- Information on previous visits to Subaru dealers or independent repair shops for previous A/C work.

It is very important that refrigerants be handled properly. Always wear protective gloves and goggles. For your safety and the safety of others, it is imperative that the work area is properly ventilated. If a refrigerant release occurs, wait until the mist clears before continuing.

R12 and R134 are to be handled sepa-

rately. The two refrigerants cannot be mixed. The lubricating oils used in R12 and R134a systems are incompatible. Service tools cannot be intermixed. If you find yourself not sure of what to do when servicing an R134a system, don't guess. Refer to service manuals and service bulletins. As with all automotive repair work, good service depends on good diagnosis.