

## **How to Cool Down an Overheated Car**

### **Things You'll Need:**

- Car Manuals
- Rags
- Engine Coolants

**Step 1** Turn off the engine.

**Step 2** Wait. If the engine is steaming, don't open the hood.

**Step 3** Pull the hood release lever under the dashboard to open the hood when the car has cooled completely.

**Step 4** Walk around the front of the car, reach under the hood, find the latch and squeeze it. As you squeeze the latch, pull up and open the hood.

**Step 5** Check the coolant reservoir tank first. It's a plastic jug that has a small hose running to the radiator. The reservoir can be filled when the engine is hot (except on German and Swedish cars, the plastic reservoir is also under pressure, so don't open when the engine is hot).

**Step 6** Open the radiator cap with a rag. Remember: open it only after the engine has completely cooled. If you're not sure, don't open the cap. If you open the cap while it's still warm, you may burn yourself with steam or hot coolant. Open the cap slowly, as if you were opening a bottle of soda that has been shaken up.

**Step 7** Examine the radiator. Look inside and see if there's coolant left. If needed, fill to the top of the radiator.

**Step 8** Put the radiator cap back on.

**Step 9** Check to see that the upper or lower radiator hose, or any of the heater hoses, hasn't burst.

**Step 10** Restart the engine.

**Step 11** Watch the temperature gauge obsessively. Don't let the needle go into the red. Turn off the engine if the gauge approaches the red zone.

**Step 12** Understand that you can continue driving a high-temperature vehicle if you're far from a phone or a service station and the car does not need coolant (or does not respond to these instructions). However, drive only as long as you stop and turn off the engine whenever the gauge gets close to the red, and let the engine cool down until you drive again. This may take a long time, but it probably beats walking

### **Tips & Warnings**

- Overheating can be caused by factors other than low coolant level (thermostat stuck closed, blocked radiator, malfunctioning fan or failed water pump). If the coolant level isn't low, it's time to visit a mechanic.
- It's OK to add just plain water or antifreeze in an overheating, emergency situation. When routinely adding or changing coolant, always use a 50-50 mixture of water and antifreeze.